

Christ's Coming Again

By THOMAS VOADEN





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CHRIST'S COMING AGAIN

Christ's Coming Again

*An Exposition
of His Teachings on That Subject
and
A Refutation of Premillennial Views*

By THOMAS VOADEN
Author of "Christianity and Socialism"



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economic, social, moral, and religious consequences of the inequitable distribution of wealth. The war is the outcome, and the partial solution of the problem. Second problem, the divisions of Christendom, and especially of Protestantism. The abuses of liberty, the ignoring of the idea of unity, and the consequent rivalry and waste of resources. Sectarianism condemned by Paul. The remedy. The war promoting the solution of this problem also. The third problem, that of recovering the fullness of spiritual life that prevailed in the early church. We have abolished slavery, and other iniquitous systems and laws, partially abolished the liquor traffic, etc. But these, although good, are outward reformations. The early church could not do this, but sought a spiritual enduement, and went with this to evangelise the masses. This spiritual enduement is the great need of to-day. Can be obtained only through renunciation of earthly interests and ambitions. When Christ comes He will effect more than outward reformation. He will go to the root of evil. He will regenerate the hearts of men. Signs that His coming is not far off. The worldly spirit everywhere prevalent, and the love of many has grown cold. False prophets, false teachers, and mischievous or misleading sects are numerous and busy. History moves in cycles or periods; also moves, like the planets, directly onward to the ultimate, glorious consummation. Prayer for a new and speedy revealing of the Son of Man.

INTRODUCTION.

THE subject of Eschatology is profoundly fascinating. Whether we rest in a firm belief of a blessed future, revealed in the visions of saint or prophet; or seek ourselves to penetrate the unknown and make fresh discovery of what lies in the hereafter—we find ourselves under its spell. It colors all our outlook upon life; it fires the imagination; it determines action; it stimulates emotions of terror or of joy in perilous times; it gives strength to endure the ills of life—whether through some notion of irrevocable doom, or by reason of a living, optimistic faith.

Since earliest times men have asked the question, "It a man die shall he live again?" and the answers have been many and various. Where there was no clear notion of individual life surviving the grave, a man hoped to live on in his son and his son's son; in the perpetuity of his house, or in the community of his people. Or his imagination led him from the sepulchres of his family or clan to the childlike conception of an underworld, where the dead dwelt together as in the world above. It was easy then to think of the chief or hero, so powerful here, as carrying that power with him into the hereafter, or as possessing a mysterious and extraordinary ability to help or to hurt those whom he had left behind on the earth.

It is exceedingly interesting to Bible students to watch the growing religious life of the people of Israel as they were being divinely led, instructed and prepared for their great mission to humanity. The early teachers of the religion of Jehovah denied any knowledge or power to the inhabitants of Sheol (the underworld), thus setting themselves against the popular notions. The laws of Israel forbade the practices of showing reverence at the graves of the

dead, and consulting the dead through witchcraft and necromancy. But the popular superstition was deep rooted and survived throughout the whole history of Israel to the time of Christ; as indeed it does still survive, in one form or other, even in our own day.

There are three or four parallel lines of development clearly traceable in the Old Testament and early Jewish literature, along which the people of Israel were led to that belief in the resurrection of the dead and in the coming of the Kingdom of God which prevailed among them in the time of our Lord. There was first the great prophetic hope of the salvation of Israel; of the coming of a glorious and perfect King of David's line; and of the establishment, upon a firm foundation of righteousness and justice, of an empire which should bring blessing to all nations. This hope was cherished from age to age in spite of repeated disappointment and long waiting, and, in the centuries just before the birth of Christ, was broadened and heightened into the expectation of the triumph of Jehovah over all His foes and the foes of His people in Heaven, earth and the abyss, and the coming of a divine Son of Man to judge and to rule the world.

There was in the second place, such an enriching and deepening of religious experience as led to the belief that the good man had, in his relationship to Jehovah, an imperishable wealth, a joy that was indestructible, and an assurance of a life with God forevermore. Along with this belief, which receives fine expression in Psalms xvi., xvii, xlix, and lxxiii, there arose during the Babylonian exile and afterward, out of the sore disappointments and bitter trials through which the best people were called to pass, the conviction that a just God must and will set all these things right: vindicating the innocent, rewarding the righteous,

and punishing their oppressors, if not in this life then in some life beyond this; in some new life into which the souls of men shall enter, and where justice and the moral government of God shall finally prevail.

The growing emphasis in later times upon the faith of the individual, his experience and his hope, led to the expectation that all the faithful people of Jehovah who had died would be brought up out of the underworld to share in the glorious Kingdom of the Messiah upon earth. Thus arose the doctrine of the resurrection. The two centuries before the coming of Christ were full of speculation concerning this and other related doctrines. The religion of Israel had been brought face to face with the philosophies of Greece, of Egypt and of the East, and had to justify its existence and endeavor to solve its problems in the new atmosphere of speculation and controversy which was thus created. We may follow in the books of the second and first centuries B.C. and the first century A.D. the rise of such conceptions as that of a new heaven and a new earth, which is to be the seat of the Kingdom of God; and of a preliminary and then a final judgment. The idea of an eternal Kingdom of the Messiah upon earth gives place to that of one which is to be only temporal, and after which the final judgment will take place (an anticipation of millennial views). The doctrine of the resurrection becomes more spiritual, and the ideas are developed of a heaven of bliss and a gehenna of fire which are to be the final and eternal abodes respectively of the righteous and of the wicked.

The author of this book has rendered a very important service in taking up, at this point, his study of the teachings of Jesus and His Apostles, and in his endeavor to show the more purely ethical and spiritual significance of the

eschatological sayings and parables of Jesus. There will, unquestionably, be differences of opinion with regard to some of his interpretations. It may be held that Jesus, in the limitation of knowledge imposed upon Him by His incarnation, actually held the views and expectations of His time with respect to the speedy coming in visible form of the divine Son of Man, and the establishment of His Kingdom; and that He Himself had to learn through repeated discouragement and temptation their more spiritual meaning and essential content. Or it may be held that Jesus sees in perspective the near mingling with the far, and speaks almost in the same breath of the approaching destruction of Jerusalem and the remote end of the world and final ushering in of the Kingdom of God.

The author's interpretations have, on the whole, the merit of consistency,* and will commend themselves to many who have grown weary of the presumptuous and fanciful (often fantastic) explanations of Old and New Testament prophecy by certain modern sects and societies—Adventist, Millennial, or what not. His conception of judgment taking place in the crises of history, and of the coming of the Kingdom in every new movement for the good of humanity is (surely) essentially true. The justification of his book lies in the necessity that is upon us, as upon the Christian church in every age, to give fresh interpretation of the life and words of Jesus in the light of our own time; and fresh expression to them in terms of our own life and thought. Jesus is ever old and ever new. He is the Man of History and the Spirit of Progress. He was, He is, and He is to come. The author, too, is not blind to the implications of his theory, and recognizes that He whose

* The Introduction was written some time before the manuscripts of this work were finally revised and completed by the author.—T.V.

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coming is written large upon the pages of history in lines of social and spiritual struggle and upward movement, may yet appear in some great "divine event, toward which the whole creation moves."

J. F. McLAUGHLIN.

TORONTO, *June 1st, 1917.*

PREFACE.

THE present work does not profess to be a profound or exhaustive theological treatise. It does not touch upon difficult questions of Eschatology (the science of the Last Things), except in an incidental way. It does not discuss the question of the Millennium, the Golden Age that is yet to be; the final consummation of human history; nor the resurrection of the dead, "nor the life of the world to come"; and it is not a discussion of the Second Coming of Christ. In the popular mind and in common phraseology the Second Coming of Christ means the Supreme Event referred to in the ritual used by clergymen at the burial of the dead, "At whose Second Coming in glorious majesty to judge the world, the earth and the sea shall give up their dead, and the corruptible body of those who sleep in Him, shall be changed and made like unto His own glorious body according to the mighty working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself." The expression, Second Coming of Christ, has been derived, we presume, from the passage in Hebrews ix:28, "So Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for Him, unto salvation" (Revised Version). And this was written when Christ's first coming was so recent, and the influence of it was so overpowering, and the present problems of the early disciples were so pressing, that they were not prepared to see that Christ would come in the great Spiritual visitations of history in the centuries that were still in the future. But the present writer holds that this is precisely what our Lord intended to teach in His discourses in Matthew, Mark and Luke about His coming again—always remembering, of course, that the coming or visitation which would follow

immediately after the destruction of Jerusalem, was the one which He had especially in view; and it is to illustrate and prove this view, that the writer has prepared this volume. He has, moreover, endeavored to write in a simple style, and in such language that the average intelligent layman may find it easy to read.

The reader may complain of a certain amount of repetition in certain parts of the book. This was difficult to avoid, because at different points the different parables which he has endeavored to explain allude to the same kind of conditions and to similar facts. Thus the decline of the spiritual life is implied in the parable about the lord going away into a far country, and in the parable of the Wheat and the Tares in the statement "while men slept the enemy sowed tares." The title of the book might as well have been "Divine Visitations" but for the fact that that title would not have suggested the purpose nor the contents of the book as well; for what are divine visitations but comings of the Lord? Certain Premillennial views are being taught, and are being industriously circulated by some good men, and by some others whose motives may possibly not be so good. The expectations raised by such views are doomed to be disappointed, as they have been disappointed again and again during the last nineteen hundred years, because they are out of harmony with God's way of working in Providence; and out of harmony with His regular methods of regenerating men; out of harmony with the methods by which Christ said that the Divine Spirit would work (John xvi:7). Hence there is all the greater reason for setting forth the real meaning of our Lord's teachings on this subject at the present time.

It is not from any love of controversy that the writer has undertaken to refute and lessen the influence of these

premillennial views. He has written because these views certainly have a discouraging and depressing effect on certain forms of Christian activity. It should be the mission of the Christian church, not only to regenerate individual souls, as premillennial writers teach; but to improve social, economic and political conditions, and, if possible, international relationships among men, and to make this world a better world to live in. But premillennial writers generally hold that world conditions are inevitably becoming worse and worse, and will continue to become worse and worse, until the Lord shall come again in their sense of the word; and quite consistently, they have but little sympathy or interest in any benevolent, statesmanlike plan, or in any form of Christian activity along the lines just mentioned. In fact, at a meeting of the Bible and Prophetic Conference held in Toronto, Aug. 27-28, 1916, one of the prominent speakers actually stated, with the approval of his audience, that "the only remedy for the vices of society was the Second Coming of Christ, when all wrongs would be made right." Of course he meant "the second visible and imminent coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to establish His world wide kingdom on earth." These are the very words of the ninth article of their creed.

The writer wishes to acknowledge that he has received very valuable criticisms and suggestions from his friend Dr. John F. McLaughlin of Victoria College, Toronto, who has written the Introduction. He has been helped also by a work on "Messiah's Second Advent" by the late Professor Calvin Goodspeed of McMaster University, Toronto. Dr. Goodspeed does not advance the Spiritual visitation theory advocated in the present work. He has two chapters on "The Ever Imminent Coming of Christ." In the second of these he states that there are other comings of the Lord

in the New Testament besides His visible, personal coming at the Last Day. "First, He is represented as coming in His special and more striking Providential dealings with men." "Secondly, He is said to come to take His people to Himself when they die." And he explains such passages as Matt. x:23, xvi:28, xxiv:51, Rev. ii:5, ii:10, ii:16, iii:11, according to this view. We consider, however, that this view is quite inadequate as an explanation of our Lord's parables about His coming in Matthew's Gospel, chaps. xxiv and xxv. But his review of the passage in Rev. xx:4-6 about "the first resurrection" and about the saints reigning with Christ for "a thousand years" is a carefully written and able reputation of the premillennial view. The author obtained some good points also from a couple of articles on the subject by the late Rev. John Laing, a prominent Presbyterian minister, in one of the religious magazines. With these acknowledgments he sends forth his book with the earnest hope that it may help to clear up a great subject on which many minds are in a perplexed and unsettled state. It is true that a man may be a very good man and not have very clear views on important religious subjects; but it is also true, that light on the understanding often greatly aids the heart, and thereby greatly strengthens and inspires the life.

THOMAS VOADEN.

TEETERVILLE, Ont., Canada

March 15th, 1918.

CHRIST'S COMING AGAIN

CHAPTER I.

THE ASSURANCES OF CHRIST AND THE VIEWS OF THE EARLY DISCIPLES.

THROUGHOUT our Lord's ministry on earth His little company of disciples did not fully understand His real mission. As soon as they came into His presence, and listened to His discourse, they felt that He was a gracious, far visioned, and kingly personality; and they were drawn to Him by the instincts of love, and by the genial power of leadership which He possessed. But they were like the rest of mortals: the amount which they could see depended on their seeing power and on the breadth of their horizon. They could see that Jesus was the predicted deliverer, the promised Messiah of their race; but their narrow horizon prevented them from seeing beyond that; and their deficiency in seeing power prevented them seeing even that clearly. They thought He would be a temporal prince, that He would set their people free from the Roman yoke, that He would fulfill the promise of Isaiah (see Isaiah xi:3; etc.), and rule over them with justice, equity and love. But they had no proper view of His purpose of establishing a spiritual reign over the whole human race; and when at length He was betrayed and put to death, when their illusion about a temporal kingdom was dispelled, they were filled with unutterable sorrow. They felt as if everything that life was worth living for ~~was~~ gone. But they had been on safe lines. The Pharisees who rejected Him had been letting their hearts cramp their understanding; their meagre human sympathies held them down to self-centred, narrow views. But the hearts of these disciples had gone ahead of their understanding; they had made a venture in the confidence of love; and such men are sure to find themselves in trouble

before long; but they are just as sure to receive new visions and new assurances at length if they only persevere and wait; and even if these visions and assurances are not clearly understood by them at first, they find new comfort in the new truth which they imperfectly see. Their richer, deeper spiritual sympathies prepare them for larger thoughts even if they are slow to learn. And after their Master's death, the disciples found new comfort in His assurances that He would come again. "I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also" (See John xiv:3). "I will not leave you comfortless," or desolate, "I come to you." (See John xiv:19 R.V.). These assurances were given in the latter part of His ministry. They were frequently stated, and were amplified and illustrated in the latter part of the Gospels according to Matthew, Mark and Luke. We see this in the parables of the Ten Virgins, the Servants waiting for their Lord, the Separation of the Sheep and the Goats, etc. And His coming again is the background of His thought in the discourse about the Holy Spirit, the other Comforter, in John xiv-xvi. We may add that the largeness of the space occupied by these teachings indicates their importance to Christ's disciples of all time.

The time of this coming again was clearly indicated within certain limits. It is true that according to Matt. xxiii:36 Our Lord says, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, not even the angels of Heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only"; and this verse is sometimes quoted to prove that Christ's coming was away off in the vague, indefinite future, and that the time of it was absolutely unknown to any one on earth. But the verse only proves that the PARTICULAR DAY AND HOUR when it would occur was unknown. The limits of the period within which

Christ's coming would take place are definitely and emphatically stated, but the *particular day and hour* of its occurrence within those limits was not revealed; that is all that this verse proves. Christ's coming was to take place within the period of His own generation according to Matt. xvi:28. Just after informing His disciples of His approaching death, He says, "The Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father and with His angels and then shall He render unto every man according to his deeds" (R.V.). And then He added "Verily I say unto you there are some of them that are standing here that shall not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom." It is true that some will say "This refers to the Transfiguration." But will the reader notice? Jesus says that *some* of those who were standing by would not "taste of death till," etc. This implies that numbers of others would taste of death before the event. But the view of the Transfiguration of Christ was reserved for the chosen disciples; and it took place only a few days afterwards; and none of the disciples died before the event; so that this explanation of some premillennial writers is easily ruled out. And this statement in Matt. xvi:28 distinctly implies that this coming of Christ would take place within about forty years. Within that period nearly all of those who were "standing by" would pass away. It was about the year 30 A.D. when Jesus spoke these words. Therefore the coming of Christ referred to would take place not much later than 70 A.D., the date at which Jerusalem was destroyed. And this statement about the time of His coming is repeated in His great discourse in Matthew's Gospel chaps. xxiv and xxv. Will the reader carefully read the following verses?—

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall

fall from Heaven, and the powers of the Heaven shall be shaken [verse 29].

"And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in Heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth [or of the land] mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory [verse 30].

"And He shall send His angels [or messengers] with a great sound of a trumpet and they shall gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of Heaven to the other [verse 31].

"Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away *till all OF THESE THINGS BE FULFILLED*" [verse 34].

In these verses we have another complete proof that Christ's coming would take place in the period of His own generation; or more definitely, soon after the destruction of Jerusalem. Immediately after the "tribulation of those days" in which Jerusalem would be destroyed, the Christian people of that time would see "the sign of the Son of Man in Heaven," and then they would see the "Son of Man coming in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory," and then the angels or messengers would be sent forth, etc. The words in verse 34 state the limit of the period. It is true that some have claimed another meaning for the word "generation"; they have said that in the original this word means "race," and that consequently the words "this generation" mean "the human race"; but this view is so forced and so out of harmony with the context, that not many would suggest such a thing, and only those who have a preconceived theory to maintain. The original Greek word for "these things" in verse 34 is *ταυτα* (tauta), and signifies "the things mentioned just before." There is another Greek word signifying "these things," namely, *Tade* (tade), but it means "the things mentioned after," or as we say, "as follows": so that we have no more right to except one part of the things mentioned before than

we have to except another part. All are included in the affirmation given in verse 34. Therefore "the tribulation of these days," the darkening of the sun, the failure of the moon to give her light, etc., the sign of the Son of Man in Heaven, and the coming of the Son of Man in the clouds of Heaven, would all become actual facts before the generation in which Christ lived would pass away. We have dwelt on this point at a somewhat tedious length, because, contrary to all the laws of language, one part of these verses has commonly been made to refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, and another part has been made to refer exclusively to a final Judgment day which may be millenniums away.* Some critical thinkers say that we are not always sure that we have the very words of Christ in the Gospels. We shall consider this question briefly in the Chapter on "The Unshaken Basis of Faith." Meanwhile we assume that Matthew the former taxgatherer, who could keep accounts for the Roman Government, has given us a correct account of Christ's discourse, and a correct statement of the period in which the epoch and coming would occur.

Again, in the latter part of the Gospel according to John we have another statement that gives some indication of the time of Christ's coming. It was after the Resurrection, and Jesus and a number of His disciples were beside the Sea of Galilee. He had been telling Peter what his fate would be. "When thou shalt be old thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee and carry thee whither thou wouldst not." "And Peter turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following, and said Lord and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If

* The reader will find an exposition of this passage in the Chapter on "The Sheep and the Goats."

I will that he tarry till I come what is that to thee? follow thou me" (John xxi:21-23). This statement clearly proves that Christ's coming would take place before the death of the Apostle John. And the foregoing views about the time of Christ's coming are confirmed by what we read in the second and third chapters of the Book of Revelation. In these chapters we find further statements about a coming of Christ to the seven churches in Asia, statements which imply that this coming was imminent at the time. It was one of "the things that must shortly come to pass" (Rev. i:1).

Competent Christian scholars are about agreed that the Book of Revelation was issued in the year 93 A.D. or thereabouts. They consider that internal evidence, compared with contemporary conditions and events, clearly prove this date; and Irenaeus, a Christian bishop of the second century, has left a statement to this effect. At that time the Emperor Domitian was reigning in Rome and the Christians were subject to terrible persecutions because they would not take part in Emperor worship; and the book was written to encourage them in their tribulations and testings of faith. It is an apocalypse, that is to say, it is one of a class of literature that was common among the Jews in the first two centuries before Christ, and among the Christians and Jews in the first century after Christ. (The reader will find the subject of Apocalyptic literature more fully presented in the Chapter on Paul's views.) This Book of Revelation, moreover, is the work of one author, though some earlier apocalypses appear to have been made use of, and to have been woven into it in some places; for instance there is the passage in Rev. xi:1-2:—

"1 And there was given unto me a reed like unto a rod; and the angel stood saying, Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and them that worship therein.

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"2 But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months."

This section clearly refers to a time shortly before Jerusalem was completely destroyed, for the temple is represented as standing yet. And some of the critics conclude that the writer of this passage was a Jew, or he would not have believed that Jerusalem would be destroyed and the temple be exempt. A Christian writer would remember the impressive words of Jesus that there would "not be left here one stone upon another that would not be thrown down" (Matt. xxiv:1-2).

Again, Arthur S. Peake, a distinguished scholar of the Primitive Methodist denomination in England, referring to the messages to "the seven churches which are in Asia," writes as follows: "The references to persecution in the letters to the seven churches are quite different in character from those in the later portions of the book. In the former the Jews are the enemy. In the latter the Roman empire with its insistence on the worship of the Emperor, is the enemy." In the former one faithful martyr is mentioned (Rev. ii:12) in the latter multitudes have been sacrificed. "In the letters the condition of the churches suggests no serious peril from the Roman Government, rather they are in peril from their own shortcomings"; and these are of a type which we do not expect in a community harassed by severe tribulation. From such facts as the foregoing he concludes that some elements in the book must be as early as A.D. 70 or earlier still.*

* See Arthur S. Peake's "Introduction to the New Testament" and the Chapter on the Book of Revelation.

It was the habit of the apocalyptic writers to start with events which belonged to a period of time considerably earlier than the date of writing, and the writer of the Book of Revelation thus appears to have done the same, and the messages to the churches probably refer to a period considerably earlier than Domitian's reign, and nearer the time when Jerusalem was destroyed.

These messages to the seven churches in Asia are the words of Jesus addressed to John in the Isle of Patmos. And they sound like the words of Jesus. It would be a strain on faith to imagine that they were conceived by some other mind and attributed to Him. In every respect they are marvellous. In their loftiness and sublimity; in their tone of authority; in the range of intellectual and spiritual vision which they manifest; in their harmony with the laws of universal history—they compare with any sayings attributed to Jesus in the Gospel according to John. Take the message to the church at Ephesus for example, "And unto the angel of the church at Ephesus write" (Commentators explain that "the angel" here refers to the superintendent messenger of the church and not to a celestial being), "These things saith He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, and that walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labor and thy patience and that thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles and are not and hast found them false. . . . Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee because thou hast left thy first love." "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly and will remove thy candlestick out of its place except thou repent." How many times in history has this removal of the candlestick taken place? The churches in

Asia become unfaithful; the divine life and enthusiasm wanes, and the divine light passes to churches in other parts. It passes from the Roman churches and shines among the persecuted Waldenses. In a considerable degree the same divine light passes from the Church of England and shines among the Puritans and Quakers. In a considerable degree again it passes from the Puritan churches, and appears again among John Wesley's Methodists, and in no small measure it passes in the nineteenth century from Wesleyan Methodism in England to the Salvation Army under General William Booth. This paragraph will suggest what the coming of Christ, which we have not yet defined, means to churches that have become historic and "respectable," and have lost their early divine enthusiasm and their "first love."

Beside the warning to the church in Ephesus, there is the warning to the church in Pergamos, "Repent, or else I WILL COME UNTO THEE QUICKLY and will fight against thee with the sword of my mouth" (Rev. ii:16). And the warning to the church at Sardis, "Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast and repent; if therefore thou shalt not WATCH I WILL COME ON THEE AS A THIEF, and thou shalt not know at what hour I will come upon thee" (Rev. iii:3 and Luke xii:39). And there is the warning to the angel of the church in Philadelphia, "BEHOLD I COME QUICKLY: hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." These warnings certainly refer to an approaching coming of Christ, a coming or Spiritual visitation that would be realized by these very churches in their own day, and possibly in a few years or months. What would have been the purpose of such warnings if there was not to be a coming of Christ until His final glorious appearing in "the Last Day"? And there is the comforting assurance to

the faithful in the church in Thyatira, "But unto you I say, to the rest that are in Thyatira, as many as have not this teaching . . . I cast upon you none other burden; nevertheless that which ye have already HOLD FAST TILL I COME" (Rev. ii:24-25). This exhortation also certainly implies that Christ was coming soon to this very church in Thyatira; and that the tried and faithful ones would have to wait only a comparatively little while. Only a little while and His promise would be fulfilled, "I will not leave you desolate I come to you" (John xiv:18). What consolation would there have been in such assurances if there was not to be a coming of Christ for another nineteen hundred or two thousand years?

And we assume that Jesus was not mistaken now that He was in the glorified state. He knew. And John was mature enough in the spiritual life; he was familiar enough with His Lord's way of revealing truth to be able to receive His communications. And we assume further that Jesus was not surprised nor mistaken in regard to the course of events during the period of His own life and times. It is true that devout Jews of that period were expecting a tremendous end-of-the-world crisis, an apocalyptic "consummation," to be the result of the Messiah's life and work; they conceived of that consummation as not being indefinitely far off. And some modern thinkers suppose that in the early part of His ministry Jesus shared these expectations with His own disciples and with the Jews; only they admit that His views were more refined than theirs; and such thinkers suppose further that the thought of Jesus "had a gradual development during His ministry, and that He passed by degrees from the external to the spiritual view of the Kingdom." But we reply, that from the beginning of His ministry Jesus taught that His King-

dom was inward and spiritual; else why did He give such a parable as that of "the Leaven and the Meal," and such pronouncements as the Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount. Besides, the period of His ministry was too busy and too brief to admit of such changes and such reforming of His views. Moreover, such changes would have been noticed particularly by His disciples, and would have seriously affected their confidence in Him as a leader, and would have weakened His influence over them. No, we believe that it was in the period of the eighteen unrecorded years, from the time that He was twelve years of age till He was thirty, that He passed through the changes of view to which we have referred. It was during that period that He shed off the prevailing Jewish views. The religious history of the Jewish race supplied Him with the facts, and He had studied these with the prophetic and philosophic instinct, and with the Divine Spirit for His guide. And when the period of His public ministry began He was fully prepared, He understood the plan of universal history, and He was not expecting that the consummation of all earthly events would be taking place in the near future. He was looking forward to another epoch or consummation, one that would be of tremendous import indeed; but He knew that after it would be over, the life and activities of humanity would still go on; generation after generation would be born, and flourish or languish, and pass away, and the end not come. In the parable of the Marriage Feast for the King's Son (Matt. xxii:1-14) He forecast the history of His Kingdom for the next forty years; in it He shows beforehand that the Jews would for the most part reject the Gospel; that at length Jerusalem would be destroyed, and that this destruction would take place under the direct Providence of God (see verse 7). And then He shows that the Gentile

racés, without distinction, would be invited to the Gospel feast. And thus the history of the Kingdom of God, instead of being ended upon this earth, would be only properly begun; it would be only at the entrance of immeasurable areas of human life; and these areas would have to be subdued before the final consummation would take place (1 Cor. xv :24-28). This parable was certainly delivered by our Lord. Even the extreme critics would not question this. It fits perfectly into its place as an answer to the Pharisees; and the general teachings of Jesus fit most naturally and harmoniously into the foregoing views.

We believe in the true humanness of Jesus. He was not omniscient, He was not omnipotent, He was made "perfect through suffering"; and we claim that the foregoing view of Him is not out of harmony with those limitations which His human nature imposed. But so completely did He give Himself up to the will of the Infinite Father during those unrecorded years, so completely was He open to divine light, and so responsive to divine leading, that after his anointing by the Divine Spirit at the age of thirty years, He emerged a transcendent Personality, still truly human and at the same time truly and manifestly Divine.

And there is another critical objection to be met, although not a very strong one we think. It is said by some that this coming of Christ was fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem. But we reply that the destruction of Jerusalem and the coming of Christ are kept entirely separate and distinct. Let the reader look over the passage in Matt. xxiv :29-30 again. The destruction of Jerusalem was to be followed by certain other occurrences; "the sun would be darkened," "the moon would not give her light," "the stars would fall from heaven," etc. And after all of this people would see "the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heav-

en.”* Language could not state more clearly that Christ’s coming would take place after the destruction of Jerusalem; and was therefore an entirely different event, however closely it was related to it in God’s plan. And beside this, Christ’s warnings or promises that He would come to the churches in Ephesus, Sardis, Thyatira, etc., answer this objection. They refer to something so manifestly different from the destruction of Jerusalem that there is really no need for argument or reply. The Christians at Ephesus, Sardis, etc., had no part in the destruction of Jerusalem; they did not see its overthrow nor share its woe; and yet Christ was to come to them. In summing up the substance of our previous paragraphs, therefore, we may say that we have our Lord’s definite and explicit statement, repeated and emphasized again and again, that He would come again within the period of His own generation. The question then arises, Did events turn out as He said they would? We reply, Most assuredly they did. People who accept Him fully as a teacher cannot believe otherwise; and therefore it is established, as on an impregnable rock, that Christ did come again before the first century of the Christian era passed away.

Now the early disciples rightly understood the time of this coming again. They had accepted literally the Master’s statements to which we have referred. And accordingly we see frequent proofs in the Acts of the Apostles, in the Epistles, as well as in the Book of Revelation, that the early church was living in constant expectation of His approaching return to the earth. James says (chap. v:7-8 R.V.), “Be patient therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit

* The reader will find a fuller explanation of the passage in Matt. xxiv:29-34 in the Chapter on “The Sheep and the Goats.”

of the earth being patient over it till it receive the early and the latter rain. Be ye also patient, stablish your hearts for the coming of the Lord is at hand" (R.V.). In the First Epistle to the Thessalonians (chap. iv:15) Paul says "We that are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord," and in 1 Thess. v:23 "I pray God that your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," and again in Phil. iv:5 "Let your moderation be known unto all men, The Lord is at hand." And in the Epistle to the Hebrews (chap. x:37) it is said "For yet a little while and He that shall come will come and will not tarry." And in 1 Cor. i:4-8 Paul says "I thank my God always on your behalf for the grace of God that is given you by Jesus Christ, . . . so that ye come behind in no gift, waiting for the coming [or the Revelation] of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall confirm you unto the end that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." But the most significant of all of these quotations are Paul's words in the first recorded epistle that he wrote, namely, the First Epistle to the Thessalonians, "*We that are alive unto the coming of the Lord.*" These words clearly prove that at the time of writing Paul expected that he himself, along with his fellow Thessalonian Christians, would be living when Christ's coming would take place, else he would have written "*they* that are alive and remain," instead of "*we* that are alive and remain." His view that the coming was imminent at that time was so pronounced that the Thessalonians became unsettled and "shaken in their minds." They were neglecting their regular and proper work in their expectation of a coming wonder. So that Paul wrote to them in a second letter not to be troubled, nor "beguiled" as there would be signs preceding the coming, namely, an apostasy in the church, and a revela-

tion of "the man of sin" (see 2 Thess. ii:1-4); and therefore the coming was somewhat farther off than they at first supposed, but they were "to stand fast, and hold the traditions which they had been taught" in the promise of "recompense" and "rest" from afflictions in the day when He would come. (See 2 Thess. i:4-10 and 1 Peter iv:7.) Jesus is coming again! Jesus is coming soon! Soon our eyes shall look upon the form of that glorious and beloved Being whom the apostles and so many others have known and listened to on earth, and who is now in His heavenly abode! Jesus is coming again to earth! This was the confident expectation; this was the abiding joy of the early disciples; this was the great incentive to labor, and "the powerful co-efficient" of life, in the persecutions and tribulations which they endured. Jesus is coming again!

But while they correctly understood the time, they misunderstood the manner and the real meaning of His coming, just as at the first, they misunderstood His mission as the Jewish Messiah. As they had had materialistic conceptions, instead of spiritual conceptions of His mission, so here they had materialistic conceptions instead of spiritual conceptions of His coming again. Their materialistic conceptions reappeared, only in another form. They looked for His coming again as "a visible procedure." They looked for "a visible, bodily, local coming," as it is expressed by one modern writer who is still looking for Him in that way. They were expecting Him to come in a glorious body and in external splendor, accompanied by hosts of triumphant spirits, for the purpose of literally conveying His disciples to a happier and more glorious sphere. His literal appearing in the natural sky would be the assuring signal for their release from earthly trials, as it would be to the wicked the awful sign of approaching anguish and

doom. Paul says in 1 Thess. iv:16-17 "The Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we that are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, so shall we be forever with the Lord." And in 2 Thess. i:6-9 he says "Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled, rest with us when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power." What a vivid, startling, awe-inspiring conception do these descriptions present of a world catastrophe, of a resurrection of the saints, and of eternal judgment, all to be accomplished, as Paul and Thessalonian converts believed, in their own day! It proved to be an illusion, for Christ did not come in the glorious body, in external splendor, and awe-inspiring majesty, in that generation; the last of the apostles passed away, the end of all things did not come, and the world of life and activity and suffering, and of pleasure and self-interest and ambition still went on. Their view had given them comfort for the time, but it was an illusion nevertheless; and we may remark in passing, that in its earlier and maturing stages, faith, however sincere, is still often associated with misconceptions and illusions which were supporting to us at the first in a degree, from which we could not bear to be separated too soon, as our Lord said to the sincere and sorrowing disciples in His last discourse, "I have many things to say to you but ye cannot bear them now" (John xvi:12). But

the time comes at length when these misconceptions and illusions have to be cast aside, like an outgrown garment, or left behind, as encumbrances and no longer aids to faith, before faith itself can emerge into the clearer light and more exhilarating prospects of a freer, broader, and more spiritual view. Happy is he who, for the sake of the larger life and vision, can relinquish the transient and traditional that is "decaying," and "ready to vanish away" (Hebrews viii:13), and can, at the same time, still retain in a firm grasp, the great essential and eternal realities of the spiritual realm!

CHAPTER II.

ERRONEOUS MEDIÆVAL AND MODERN VIEWS.

WE have now seen what the views of the early disciples were; later on we shall consider how much the influence of contemporary literature and thought affected them. We shall then be in a better position to understand the prejudices of the Jewish portion of the church; we shall have a clearer view of the urgent problems that preoccupied the minds of Jewish and Gentile Christians alike, and we shall be more disposed to excuse the immaturity, and, some might say, the crudeness of their views on the coming of Christ to earth. It would be too much to expect that they would break from the Present and the Past, and enter fully into the spirit and outlook of Jesus at once, and interpret all of His teachings aright. They were devout and sincere, but they were in an undeveloped stage. During His life our Lord could only give His disciples a start in the right direction. Then He left them and bequeathed to them the Holy Spirit—the Spirit of Truth. Henceforth He was to take the place of Jesus (John xvi:7) and be their Teacher and Guide (John xiv:26 and xvi:13-14). But the power to grasp the full meaning of His teaching could only gradually be evolved under the leading of the Spirit during the course of the centuries to come. “The idea of a speedy and material Second Coming to produce a catastrophe of wrath on opponents, and of salvation for Christians, was a natural ebullition of human nature dealing with ancient forms of thought, and misunderstood words of our Lord in an age characterized by endless apocalyptic literature.”* But in

*The above extract is from Rev. Dr. C. S. Eby's book on “The World Problem and the Divine Solution,” a very able review of present world religious conditions. Published by William Briggs, Toronto.

the present chapter we wish to observe that many people of later generations have fallen into the same kind of error as the early Christians fell into. Many of them also have been expecting Christ to come in the glorious body and in external splendor in their own particular day. And they have fallen into this error with less excuse, because the first disciples were within the time limit within which our Lord had stated that His coming would occur, and these people of a later date might have noted that they were outside of the time limit; they might have noted the disappointment and the failure of the earlier expectations; they might have inferred that there must have been a serious misunderstanding of what His meaning really was.

We shall refer to two or three examples of generations and of sects that have fallen into this mistake. In the latter part of the first ten hundred years of Christian history the people within the realm of Christendom had sunk into a dreadful state of moral degeneracy and decay. Christian Rome had become as corrupt as Pagan Rome was in former times. The Christian religion seemed to have resulted in utter failure after ten hundred years of trial. The downward tendencies of men were not arrested, and conditions were desperate indeed. At that crisis there arose a general expectation that the end of the world would take place as soon as the first ten centuries of the Christian era were numbered with the past; that Christ would come as soon as the last hour of the year 999 A.D. glided away; that He would then summon all men before His judgment throne and bring the reign of corruption and wickedness to an end. Accordingly a very serious mood became prevalent. Many forsook their sins, set free their slaves, gave their possessions to the church, and became too excited to pursue their regular work as they waited for the end to come. But

nothing unusual happened at the expected hour; Christ did not come in the glorious body, and the world of life and activity and suffering, and of pleasure and interest and ambition still went on; only an appalling reaction of recklessness and wickedness was the main result of following the erroneous view.

And from the time of the Reformation and onward, certain men, expecting the near approach of a second coming of Christ, have appeared upon the scene, and have gained followers in their respective times. In some cases they have been even so injudicious as to fix the date. They have studied such words as those in Daniel xii:11-12 "And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days." In studying and quoting such words they neglect any critical examination of the contents of the book. They do not follow up such questions as, "Who wrote the book?" "At what date?" "With what motive?" "In what historical surroundings?" "For what immediate purpose?" In fact they ignore criticism altogether and hold critics in contempt; and taking such passages in a very literal way, and starting from certain premises of their own, assuming that 1,290 days in Daniel means 1,290 years, they have figured out, each in his own way, just when the world would come to an end. The years 1785, 1836, 1843, 1866, 1868, have all been set and the end did not come.

"The Millerite delusion of 1844 is entitled to first place in America. William Miller began to preach his strange theories in 1831, predicting the coming of Christ in 1843. The twenty-three hundred days of Daniel, he claimed, rep-

resented an era of as many years. This era began in 457 B.C., with the return of Ezra. It therefore would expire in 1843. His followers believed the end would come on Oct. 22nd of that year. When that date passed, Miller found he had made an error of one year, and fixed the revised date to be Oct. 22nd, 1844. With unanimous fidelity his followers accepted his explanation, and throughout America and England prepared for the great day. As the time approached many abandoned their vocations, and those in the Eastern States gathered on a height in the Catskill Mountains. On the dawn of Oct. 22nd they donned muslin robes and listened for Gabriel's trump. Once, towards noon, they espied a bright, crimson cloud, which they declared to be a celestial chariot coming to carry them away. But the day and the night passed with these now disillusioned people still shivering in their ascension garments. It is but fair to add that the ecclesiastical descendants of the Millerites are the Seventh Day Adventists of to-day.*

But the old error dies hard, and now at length, in this enlightened twentieth century, there has appeared another sect whose teachings bear the melodious and alluring title of "The Millennial Dawn"; and they also are based on the same old misconception—the same old literalism—that has brought disappointment to people of that class in the generations of the past; and as an illustration of the Millennial Dawners' methods of interpretation, will the reader please have the patience to read the following example. One of their standard writers explains the words in Daniel xii:7 and in Rev. xii:14, "A time, times, and a half," in which the enemy "shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people," according to Daniel; and in which the

*From one of Rev. Byron Stauffer's articles in "The Christian Guardian" of Toronto.

church of Christ, represented as a persecuted woman, shall be sheltered and "nourished from the face of the serpent," according to the Book of Revelation. The writer assumes that "in symbolic prophecy 'a time' is a symbolic year of three hundred and sixty years." Then "a time, times and a half" equals three times and half a time. Hence "a time, times and a half" equals $360 \times 3\frac{1}{2} = 1,260$ years, which he assumes is just the length of the period in which the Papacy, "the apostate church," as he calls it, has triumphed. He explains that "the Times of the Gentiles" began in 606 B.C. The Jewish race was overthrown, and the lease of power was given to the Gentiles at that date. Hence "the Seven Times" of Israel's chastisement," or "the seven times of Gentile dominion," are reckoned ($360 \times 7 = 2,520$ years), Go back then to 606 B.C., and add 2,520 years and we are brought up to the year 1914 A.D. According to this writer, therefore, "the Times of the Gentiles, or their lease of dominion, will fully run out with the year 1914." "By that time they will be all overthrown and Christ's kingdom fully established." That means that by the year 1914 A.D. the Millennial Dawn would be fully ushered in. The foregoing view is from Vol. II. of their "Studies in the Scriptures," pp. 90, 91 and 170. It was issued in the year 1907. How this tallies with the facts we all know. In August, 1914, instead of the Millennial Dawn being ushered in, the most terrible and disastrous war of history suddenly broke out.

But it is not merely these erring generations and these misguided sects that have had such misconceptions; many excellent and spiritually minded men of a mystical type of piety have held them too. Some of these have been men of exemplary piety and beautiful spirit. Their only fault has been that they were disposed to believe too much and to

exercise their reason not enough. And some men of this class have not shed off such misconceptions even yet, but hold views that are based upon them, and are derived from them; and they teach such views most industriously as a warning to the world and a comfort to the church. And we call men of this religious class Premillennialists because they believe in a millennium or in a reign of Christ on earth for a thousand years. They believe that during this reign He will be present in a glorious body. To be more definite, they believe that He will reign in the land of Palestine, with Jerusalem as His capital. They believe that His influence will be so overpowering that the evil will be overthrown, and the good in human life will be triumphantly established. They believe that all unbelief will be unanswerably rebuked, and all scepticism overwhelmingly silenced by this millennial reign of Christ. They believe that a glorious appearing of Christ, visible to every eye, in other words, a coming of Christ in a glorious body to this earth will precede this triumphant millennial reign or golden age. The word Premillennial is derived from two Latin words, "mille" which means a thousand, and "annus" which means a year, the prefix "Pre" signifying "before," so that "Premillennialism" means the belief that Christ will come literally and bodily before the millennial reign begins. Premillennialists base their belief of the foregoing views on such passages as the following:—"Behold He cometh with clouds and every eye shall see Him" (Rev. i:7). "And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives which is before Jerusalem on the east and the Mount of Olives shall cleave before Him toward the east and toward the west," etc. (Zech. xiv:4). "And I saw thrones and they that sat upon them; and judgment was given unto them; and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for

the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands, and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." "And the angel from Heaven laid hold of that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years should be fulfilled" (Rev. xx:1-4). (See also 1 Thess. iv:14-17.)

Second—Premillennialists also believe in what they call a "rapture" of the saints, that is to say, they believe that when Christ comes, all of the saints, or an elect portion of them, will be caught up and carried away to meet the Lord in a region of cloud-land, to be transferred through this into the celestial sphere—the word "rapture" being derived from the Latin word "rapio," which means "I seize or carry away." There are various opinions among Premillennialists in regard to this "rapture" or "carrying away." Some suppose that the time of the "rapture" will be seven years; others say that the time between the "rapture" and the Revelation of Christ is indefinite. Some think that "the work of soul saving" will be ended when the "rapture" begins; others suppose that that "event will be a grand means of converting the people, and that conversion and soul-saving will be greatly promoted." Some suppose that "the reign of Anti-Christ will precede the rapture"; others that he must not be expected till long after "the rapture" occurs. We need not delay to give all of the various views, but in general we may say that they believe that in this "rapture" Christ will come "to claim His Bride" (the church), and they suppose that these views are proved by such passages as the following: "And if I go and prepare a place for you I

will come again and receive you unto Myself that where I am there ye shall be also" (John xiv:3). And "We which are alive and remain unto the Coming of the Lord shall not precede those that are asleep" or in their graves. (See Revised Version.) "For the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, and with the voice of the archangel, and the dead in Christ shall rise first, then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we be forever with the Lord" (1 Thess. iv:14-17). See also Matt. xxiv:31 "And He shall send His angels with a sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of Heaven to the other."

Third.—They also believe that there will be two resurrections. They affirm that the Scriptures "do not teach that all of the dead will be raised at one time"; they think that the bodies of believers are raised from among the bodies of unbelievers, and caught up to meet the Lord in the air one thousand years before the latter are raised up. They base this opinion on the passages already quoted, and on the following: "The dead in Christ shall rise first" (1 Thess. iv:13-16). "And they lived and reigned with Christ one thousand years, but the rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection." (See Rev. xx:1-5.) They also refer to Paul's words in Phil. iii:11 "If by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead," which they interpret as a special resurrection from among those who are dead, or, literally, "from among the dead ones"; and they quote our Lord's words, "But when thou makest a feast call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed: for they cannot recompense thee; for thou shalt be recom-

pensed at the resurrection of the just," and they connect these words with Paul's statement in 1 Cor. xv:22-23 "Every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming." We may add that there are some among them who believe that there will be several resurrections of the bodies of men. The beginning of the foregoing view can be traced back to the earlier Jewish literalism. It is associated with the idea of two judgments, one at the beginning, and one at the end of the Messianic age. Readers who desire to study this subject more thoroughly may find it illustrated in the Book of Enoch, which is one of the important works belonging to the apocalyptic literature to which we have referred.

Fourth.—They believe in a literal restoration of the land of Palestine to the Jewish race, and they quote in favor of this, such passages as Ezek. xxxvii:22-26 "And I will gather them on every side; and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all, and they shall no more be two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all; neither shall they defile themselves any more with idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will save them out of all their dwelling places wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them; so shall they be my people and I will be their God, and my servant David shall be king over them; and they shall have one shepherd; they shall also walk in my judgments and observe my statutes and do them." And Jere. xxxii:37-39 "Behold I will gather them out of all of the countries whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in my great wrath; and I will bring them again into this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely: and they shall be my people, and I

will be their God: and I will give them one heart and one way and they shall fear me for ever." Premillennialists also quote other passages similar to these, from the latter part of Isaiah, and from Jeremiah, and Zechariah and other prophets in proof of their view that the land of Palestine, so long in the possession of foreign powers, shall yet be given back to the Jewish race. Notable among these passages are the following words from Isaiah lxi:4-6 "And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations. And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen, and your vine-dressers. But ye shall be named the Priests of the Lord: men shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves." And Isaiah lxii:8-9 "The Lord hath sworn by his right hand, and by the arm of his strength. Surely I will no more give thy corn to be meat for thine enemies; and the sons of the stranger shall not drink thy wine, for the which thou hast laboured: but they that have gathered it shall eat it, and praise the Lord; and they that have brought it together shall drink it in the courts of my holiness."*

We may add that there may be considerable difference of opinion among them on each of these four points, but they are generally agreed that social and moral conditions upon this earth are becoming worse and worse, notwithstanding

* The Rev. R. A. Torrey, the well known evangelist, gives the following passages as illustrations of the view that "Israel shall be gathered from among the nations, from the four corners of the earth, and brought into their own land":—Isaiah xi:11-12, xxvii:13, xl:8-26, li:9-23, lx:1-22, lxi:4-11; Jere. xxx:3-22, xxxiii:1-25; Ezek. xvi:60-63, xx:40-44, xxxvi:8-15 and 22-38, xxxvii:11-14; Amos ix:9-15; Micah v:29; Zech. i:14-21, viii:7-8, x:3-12, xii:1-9, xiv:1-15.

all the agencies at work to make them better; and that the only hope of mankind is the hope that Christ will come again, and begin His millennial reign. Some of them deny the accusation of being pessimistic, and try to refute that natural inference from their views; and some of them are so sure that Christ is coming soon that they claim to be optimistic in their outlook on the world; but optimistic or pessimistic, they believe the world is going from bad to worse; and their views are being industriously spread as the true disciple's only hope; and some aspects of these views have found expression in some of the popular hymns, for instance in the following hymn by Bonar:

"Lift up your heads, desponding pilgrims;
Give to the winds your needless fears;
He who has died on Calvary's mountain
Soon is to reign a thousand years.

"A thousand years! earth's coming glory—
'Tis the glad day so long foretold:
'Tis the bright morn of Zion's glory,
Prophets foresaw in times of old.

"Tell the whole world these blessed tidings;
Speak of the time of rest that nears;
Tell the oppressed of every nation,
Jubilee lasts a thousand years.

"What if the clouds do for a moment
Hide the blue sky where morn appears?
Soon the glad sun of promise given
Rises to shine a thousand years."

CHAPTER III.

CHRIST'S COMING A SPIRITUAL VISITATION

IN this chapter we wish to present a more spiritual view in the place of the misleading views which we briefly stated in Chapter II. We wish to prove that when our Lord speaks of His coming again He means a coming of the Spiritual Christ. He means a new manifestation of His presence after a period of moral and spiritual decline. In the original language the word which is rendered "coming" means "presence."* It is the same word that occurs, for instance, in Phil. ii:12, when Paul says "Wherefore, My beloved brethren, as ye have always obeyed, not as in My 'presence' only but now much more in My absence," etc. And we may add that the phrase, "the manifestation of His presence" is really a scriptural phrase. It would occur in a

* In the Greek Testament three different words are used in describing the coming of Christ, namely, ἀποκάλυψις (apokalypsis), ἐπιφάνεια (epiphaneia, and παρουσία (parousia). Apokalypsis occurs in 1 Cor. i:7 "So that ye come behind in no gift waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." In the Revised Version this is rendered "so that ye come behind in no gift, waiting for the revelation [apokalypsis] of our Lord Jesus Christ." Epiphaneia occurs in 2 Timothy iv:8 "To all them that love His appearing [epiphaneia]; and in Titus ii:13 "Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing [epiphaneia] of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Parousia is derived from παρειμι (pareimi) which means "I am present"; thus in Luke xiii:1 it reads thus:—"There were present at that season some who told Him of the Galileans," etc.; and in 1 Cor. v:3 "I verily have judged already as if I were present." Apokalypsis, therefore, means a revelation; epiphaneia means an appearing or manifestation; and parousia means presence, and is the word used for "coming" in Matthew chap xxiv as well as many times elsewhere; and these three different words present to the mind three different aspects of the same event.

literal translation of 2 Thess. ii:8, where Paul says that the Lord Jesus would slay the lawless one with the breath of His mouth and bring him to naught by "the manifestation of His presence." (See the Revised Version at the margin of this verse.) Our Authorized Version of the Bible renders this verse as follows, "And then shall that Wicked be revealed whom the Lord shall consume with spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming." Thus "the brightness of His coming" is put as equivalent to "the manifestation of His presence."

By His coming our Lord means a spiritual visitation such as the new outbreak of Christianity as a spiritual force was in the old Roman Empire in the early generations after Christ. The world conditions were then ripe for another coming of Christ in such a new outbreak of all-pervading, regenerating spiritual force. The Spirit of Christ was released, so to speak, like a pent-up flood, and given more fully among men when certain barriers had been broken down. After the power of the Jewish party in the church had been broken forever by the destruction of Jerusalem, after the old controversies about circumcision and other Jewish traditions had been settled forever by the logic of events, the new outbreak or outpouring of spiritual life occurred; the new manifestation of the Unseen Presence was given. In other words Christ came again.

By His coming our Lord means such a religious awakening as occurred in Europe under the leadership of St. Francis of Assisi (born 1182 A.D., died 1226 A.D.), a marvellous saint of the Roman Catholic Church. St. Francis was very amiable, gentle, charitable, compassionate, benevolent, generous, as well as courageous, in his relations with his fellowmen; he was very devout, humble, prayerful, open-minded, and full of faith, in his attitude

toward God; and he was conscientiously averse to receiving the praises or compliments of others. He was separate from the spirit of the world and was truly a divinely anointed man. It is true he was a man of peculiar habits and mystical type of mind, but he was adapted to the conditions of his own age. He organized the Franciscan Monks and sent them forth, two and two, to preach repentance and to declare the mercy of God to man. These monks were possessed with the same self-denying, benevolent spirit of Christ; and under their preaching wonderful revivals of religion swept over parts of Europe. Some of these were as genuine and as spiritual as that which swept over Wales a few years ago. This was a coming of Christ in the middle age period of the history of the church.

By His coming, our Lord means such a moral and religious awakening as the great Reformation under Martin Luther and Philip Melancthon and John Calvin in the early years of the sixteenth century. He means such a spiritual awakening and uplifting as the great revival of evangelical religion in England and America in the eighteenth century, under the leadership of such men as John Wesley, George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards. He means such a moral awakening as gave rise to the great anti-slavery movement which stirred the people of America from 1830 to 1865 A.D., and led to the great civil war. James Russell Lowell caught the right idea, and gave the clue to the true interpretation of our Lord's teaching when he wrote the lines:—

“Once to every man and nation
Comes the moment to decide:
In the strife of truth with falsehood
For the good or evil side.

Some great cause, God's new Messiah,
Offering each the bloom or blight
Parts the goats upon the left hand
From the sheep upon the right,
And the choice goes by forever
'Twixt that darkness and that light."

It is true indeed that the teachings of Jesus in regard to His coming again will have a transcendent fulfilment, a surpassingly glorious and awful fulfilment, in a final coming or manifestation of Christ, in a final consummation of human history, in a final judgment day. We shall refer to this in the latter part of the Chapter on "The Sheep and the Goats," and again, in the latter part of the Chapter on "Paul's Views of a Speedy Coming." But in the meanwhile we shall deal with the fulfilments that take place in human history; these are minor fulfilments; they are only foreshadowings of what will take place in the final period and on the supreme and final day, but they are the ones on which Jesus laid special emphasis, the ones which He had first in view.

Though Jesus looked at times beyond the present sphere, though He gives us some glimpses of the after life, He was eminently practical in His teaching, He usually taught with a view to something that ought to be observed or done, and He emphasized the nearer fulfilments because they were of more practical importance to His Church than

"The one far off divine event
To which the whole creation moves."

There was something which his own generation and the following generations *had to do* in order to be ready for "that day." According to Matt. xxiv:43-44 (R.V.) Jesus says, "But know this that if the master of the house had known in what watch the thief was coming he would have

watched and would not have suffered his house to be broken through"; also Luke xii:39 "therefore be ye also ready for in an hour that ye think not the Son of Man cometh." The great Lutheran Reformation broke into the old Roman Catholic Church. It came on gradually and stealthily at first; and then suddenly it was on the leaders of the Church before they were aware of it; before they suspected it at all, and it carried away a considerably portion of the goods that were in the house: in other words, many of the best people in the Church were drawn out of it, and went into the Protestant movement. In a similar way, and with similar results, the Methodist movement broke into the Church of England; in a similar way again the Anti-slavery movement broke into the Methodist Episcopal church in the United States and caused disruption and division there. The teachings of Jesus are practical we repeat; there was something which the leaders of these Churches should have done; they should have watched the conditions in their own times: they should have been on their guard against such disruptive movements; such divine visitations; such comings of the Lord as these—and not have allowed their churches to be broken up.

If our view then is the correct one, we shall see that Christ's words on His coming again, like His words on other great themes, are statements of universal law; that they are fulfilled again and again in human history; though we must note that in the great series of predictions given in Matt. xxiv, and in the corresponding passages in Mark and Luke, His particular reference is to the Divine visitation that would come to the old Roman Empire after Jerusalem would be destroyed; there are a few local references in that discourse; for instance, He particularly refers to "the abomination that maketh desolate," the Roman

power; "standing in the Holy Place," the city of Jerusalem; and He charges the Christians in the words "then let him that is in Judaea flee to the mountains," etc. These are things that would not occur in every Divine visitation or coming of the Lord; but with these few exceptions He is giving us universal truth, the illustrations of which we shall see in later chapters of this book.

These spiritual visitations are the interpositions of the divine in human affairs, they turn the course of history upward again when things have been on the downward grade; and as Dr. Harnack calls the expectation of the Lord's speedy return, "a powerful co-efficient" in the life of the early church, so in the dark periods of later history the hope of Christ's coming is still the life of the faithful, waiting disciples and becomes the salvation of the world.

"Jesus, Thy church with longing eyes,
For Thine expected coming waits;
When will the Promised light arise,
And glory beam from Zion's gates?

"Even now, when tempests round us fall,
And wintry clouds o'ercast the sky,
Thy words we joyfully recall,
And know that our redemption's nigh."

We may sometimes be disposed to think that the first disciples might have understood our Lord's teaching on this subject better than they did, but we must remember that we see things after the events. Perhaps we might not have done any better if we had grown up with their traditions and had stood in their place; still these first disciples must have known that some of the Old Testament Prophets spoke of certain spiritual and providential visitations as a coming of the Lord. Speaking to the faithful exiles in Babylon,

Isaiah says (chap. xxxv:3-4) "Strengthen ye the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart be strong, fear not, behold *your God will come* with vengeance, even God with a recompense; *He will come and save you.*"* And in his vision of the approaching deliverance, he exhorts the faithful to "prepare the way of the Lord," and "make straight in the desert a highway for our God" (Isaiah xl:3); and he adds in verse 10 "Behold *the Lord God will come* with strong hand and His arm shall rule for Him; behold His reward is with Him and His work before Him." Certainly the coming of the Lord referred to in these verses must mean a spiritual and providential visitation, and not an incarnation or coming of the Lord in a glorious body to His people. Certainly this Old Testament coming of the Lord was fulfilled in the spiritual uplift and comfort that came to the faithful Jewish people in Babylon who had almost given up hope of deliverance, according to Isaiah xl:27 "Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God?" Certainly this coming of the Lord was fulfilled in the awakening that came with the words of the great prophet who wrote the passages in Isaiah xl and lv, the second Isaiah, and it culminated in that deliverance from Babylon under the Persian King Cyrus which the second Isaiah foresaw; and the disciples of Jesus, with their minds steeped as they were in Old Testament literature and Old Testament thought, might have

* On Isaiah xxxv George Adam Smith, although considered an advanced critic, says "I feel I must keep to the older view of chap. xxxv, which makes it refer to the return from the exile. No doubt the chapter covers more than the mere return, and includes "the glorious condition of Israel after the return"; but verses 4 and 10 are undoubtedly addressed to Jews still in exile and undelivered."

inferred that the coming of the Lord in New Testament times would be realized in some similar way.

Again, in Luke xii:32-37, Our Lord spoke to the twelve disciples about a coming to themselves in particular. This coming could only have been fulfilled in the spiritual uplifting that came to them on the day of Pentecost. He says to them, "Fear not little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell what you have and give alms," etc. "Let your loins be girded about and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he shall return from the wedding; that when He cometh and knocketh they may open unto Him immediately. Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching. Verily I say unto you He shall make them sit down to meat, and when He has girded Himself, He will come and serve them." Most evidently this refers to something that was to be fulfilled in their own personal experience and before long, else He would not have charged them in particular, to "gird up their loins," "keep their lamps burning," etc., in order to be ready for the event. And this particular coming is referred to again in Matt. x:23 "Verily I say unto you ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come." This was spoken when our Lord was sending forth the disciples two and two to proclaim that "the kingdom of heaven was *at hand*," or was coming soon. Now our Lord's ministry on earth lasted only a little more than three years altogether and probably a year or more of these three years was gone when He spoke these words, and these disciples would go over the cities of Israel within the remaining two years surely, and return to Him; and all of this proves that within the next two or three years there would be a coming of the Son of Man; there would be a new "manifestation

of His presence" when His body would be no longer before their eyes; and on the day of Pentecost the promise was fulfilled. On that day the spiritual Christ did return to these disciples, according to another promise "I will not leave you comfortless [desolate], I come to you" (John xiv:18). On that day Christ did come again to the Jewish race, and come suddenly as He said He would. Compare Acts ii:2. "And *suddenly* there came a sound from Heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind," etc; and He found some prepared, but many unprepared.

Thus the coming of Christ referred to in Luke xii:32-37 was a spiritual visitation. This passage cannot be legitimately explained in any other way. But the coming of Christ referred to in John xiv:21-23 is also a spiritual visitation, as is evident to any thoughtful person as soon as he reads the words, "He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him and will *manifest Myself* unto him," this is verse 21; "If a man love me he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we *will come unto him* and make our abode with him," this is verse 23. It is true, John's Gospel was prepared in a later period than the other. It may have been written twenty-five or thirty years later than the first issues of the Gospels according to Matthew or Luke; and some minds are like that of the Apostle Thomas, they are inherently disposed to be sceptical, only they are not all so disposed to be devout, and they say that we are "nearer to the very words of Jesus" in the gospels of the earlier date.

This statement may seem like an uncalled for digression from our Lord's assuring and beautiful discourse; it will suggest an ominous and repulsive doubt to many religious minds. Nevertheless this lurking or insinuated doubt does actually occur to inquiring and critical minds, especially

among the youth during the period of their academic life; modern criticism being largely responsible for this, of course. We cannot linger here to discuss the questions which it raises, we refer the reader again to the Chapter on "The Unshaken Basis of Faith." But for the present we insist on the following point: The quotation from Luke xii:32-37 describes an experience, describes it figuratively, beautifully, accurately; and the quotation from John xiv:21-23 describes this experience, describes it clearly, concisely, suggestively. And certain matured Christian people recognize the meaning of the description as soon as it is pointed out. It sets forth in language a crisis which they themselves, or others whom they have known of, have passed through. Each description states or illustrates a law of the spiritual life; a law that has been verified and can be verified again. And if in the different gospels a different style of language occurs in describing that experience, that difference in the mode of expression does not affect the experience, and does not change the law. And, what is most important to our argument, we note that in each quotation this subjective experience is represented as a coming of Christ; it is a coming or manifestation to faithful, prepared and waiting human hearts. We must merely notice further that Luke adds a word about the co-operation of God's Providence with the man who receives this manifestation or coming of Christ. He says, "He will come AND SERVE HIM." John omits this. John was more of a mystic than Luke; and this difference in temperament accounts largely for the difference in style of expression: but, we repeat, it does not affect the essential truth. "Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching: Verily I say unto you that he shall gird himself and make them sit down to meat and shall come and serve

them." Christ comes to such individual disciples and finds them watching, or finds them in an open or expectant state of mind and He reveals or manifests Himself; then He makes them sit down to meat, in other words He makes them feed on that fuller and clearer revelation of His truth which this new manifestation or coming brings. And "when He has girded Himself," in other words, when circumstances, under the Father's overruling Providence, have brought the individual disciples to the favorable outward conditions, and the favorable place, then "He will come [a second coming or spiritual visitation] and serve them." The providential and spiritual visitations come together the second time to the individual soul or souls. "We [the Father and the Son] will come to him and make our abode with him." How wonderfully all of this was verified in the experience of the disciples whom Christ taught with the living voice! First came that revelation of Him which Peter states in his wonderful confession in Matt. xvi:16 "Thou art the Christ the son of the living God"; that confession of which Jesus said "Blessed art thou Simon Barjona for flesh and blood hath not *revealed* it unto thee but my Father which is in Heaven." (We shall consider this more fully later on in the Chapter on Paul's Views.) And later on came the other coming at Pentecost when time and place and outward circumstances all so perfectly agreed; when the multitude, under the Father's Providence, were come together from every nation under Heaven—Parthians, Medes and Elamites, and dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, etc. (see Acts ii:5-9), when they received the influence of the divine uplifting or visitation to carry it back to the countries from which they had come. In all of this divine Providence WAS SERVING these disciples and the divine Christ was visiting their hearts. And how wonder-

fully all of this is further illustrated in the experience of many modern disciples we shall see in some of the examples which we shall consider in some of the later chapters of this book. Through such manifestations or revealings Christ comes to chosen men; and through these chosen men He comes in the larger visitations of history, to society in general, as we shall also see.

There is what may be called a psychological explanation of the looking for the Lord to come in the glorious body and in visible splendor; this expectation that appears and reappears only to be disappointed again and again from age to age. It is the craving for the visible and tangible in worship that is at the back of it all. As we have already seen, the first disciples had the idea of a temporal kingdom, patterned after the ancient kingdom under David, only more glorious, more resplendent, more renowned for the prevalence of truth and right, with Jesus as absolute monarch on the throne; and when that view was shattered forever by His crucifixion and death, their minds naturally turned to the view that was most akin to it—the view of a glorious appearing of a visible Christ. It was a childish view, and Jesus had taught them better, but they did not understand. He had said “it is expedient for you that I go away [it is advantageous for you that my bodily presence be withdrawn] for if I go not away the Comforter will not come to you; but if I depart I will send Him unto you” (John xvi:7). This passage ought to silence forever the view that the world’s moral and religious condition will never improve till a visible premillennial reign of Christ on earth begins. Jesus explicitly states that the work of convincing and regenerating men would be done more effectively and more extensively by the Holy Spirit who would come and take His place, who would be another Comforter

and Advocate and Guide. And these larger and better results appeared on the very first day after the Spirit's dispensation, on Christianity's inauguration day, when three thousand souls were converted and brought into the kingdom through Peter's opening discourse. This is probably a larger number than ever was regenerated during any one month in the ministry of Jesus on earth. The bodily presence of Jesus would be no help to the regeneration of the world according to His own word; and it is a reflection on the Divine Spirit's work to assume that human conditions must become worse and worse notwithstanding all the agencies at work to make them better; and it is contrary to the facts to assume that the world has been growing worse and worse, or has made no progress toward better things through all the ages of the past. We affirm this in spite of the present awful, devastating war (A.D. 1914-1918). If we compare the conditions of to-day with the conditions of a few hundred years ago, and the moral standards of to-day with the accepted moral standards of even one hundred years ago, we shall see a moral and spiritual advance.*

This craving for the visible in worship, which was in the early disciples, is shown in a striking manner in the writings of John Henry Newman of the Church of England, author of the hymn,

"Lead Kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom."

afterward Cardinal Newman of the Church of Rome. He concluded that the Divine Being would not leave humanity without some "concrete representative of things invisible which would have the force and toughness necessary to be a breakwater against the deluge" of human tendencies to

* On this subject we would recommend Dr. R. S. Storr's great work on "The Divine Origin of Christianity, as Indicated by its Historical Effects."

irreligion and war and vice; and he assumed that that "concrete representative of things invisible" was the Roman Catholic church. The premillennialist teacher little suspects that he is attracted to his view of Christ's coming by the same inward propensity, by the same craving for the visible, that drew John Henry Newman into the Roman Catholic Church! But it is true nevertheless. The inward propensity is the same, even though it leads to different positions and to different results in different temperaments and different types of mind.

Now when these great religious awakenings occur there are certain accompaniments or signs which the discerning may read, and by which the faithful may know that God is visiting His people again. By means of these they may distinguish the genuine movement and its leaders from the teachings or the movements of false prophets and misleading guides. Our Lord gives warning that these would accompany the Divine visitations or comings of the Lord. He tells us that the most discerning need to be wary, because some men, whom Providence has never sent, may show such wonderful signs that they "would deceive if it were possible the very elect" (Matt. xxiv:24); and among the signs of the genuine movement we may note first, that at such times great assemblies are drawn together by an infectious religious enthusiasm, and are greatly affected, and at times completely overwhelmed, by a sense of the Unseen Presence. We read for instance of the Revival that swept over Italy in the closing years of the life of St. Francis of Assisi. "We hear of the brethren assembling in a desert place to rest awhile from their work and to deliberate on the best means of carrying it on. They met by hundreds in a remote glen. The peasants crept near the holy men, bringing with them their simple offerings of cooked eggs, and bread and fruit.

They saw the missionaries sitting in rows on the banks of a little stream. Some one began to sing a hymn—one of those simple canticles that were so common in the earlier stages of the Franciscan movement—and the whole assembly joined in the singing. Then came another and another. Not one but several days were spent in the rapture of song, of brief and fervent prayers, and of soul-moving addresses.” The peasants lingered, listened, joined; came forward and gave their testimonies. Business was forgotten in the spiritual excitement and enthusiasm which possessed them every one. What essential difference is there between these scenes, and the scenes in the average Methodist campmeeting in America six hundred years after St. Francis had gone to his heavenly reward? Though living under two different church organizations, they believed in the same God, the same Redeemer, the same awakening and regenerating Spirit. They had the same sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and of the awfulness of retribution; and they had the same feeling that they belonged to a Kingdom that is not of this world. There were differences of view in regard to some religious doctrines and traditions, but Jesus did not say “ye shall know them” by their orthodoxy but by “their fruits.”

There is another notable sign or characteristic of such eras or spiritual visitations. At such times the great spiritual gifts appear again in the church. Paul enumerates these in 1 Cor. xii:8-11, “To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another, the word of knowledge by the same spirit; to another, faith by the same spirit; to another, the gifts of healing by the same spirit; to another, the working of miracles,” or performance of mighty works; “to another, prophecy; to another, the discernment of spirits; to another, divers kinds of tongues; to another, the interpretation of

tongues." Let us quote one example given by Dr. R. S. Storrs, the brilliant Protestant biographer of Bernard of Clairvaux, the deeply spiritual and powerfully eloquent Roman Catholic monk. At one period, Bernard was stubbornly opposed by a certain powerful, haughty, tyrannical warrior. This warrior had deposed a faithful bishop from his office in a high-handed manner. Bernard had gone to the warrior and had reasoned and pleaded with him more than once, but all in vain. But seeing him later in a great assembly to which he was preaching, Bernard advanced toward him with fearless step and piercing eyes, and addressed him words of rebuke and appeal with such overwhelming personal authority and force, that an awful spell of silence and fear fell on the assembly, as if the thunders of heaven were about to break; and the haughty warrior fell prone and helpless upon the ground, unable to rise till Bernard took him by the hand and helped him up. Then Bernard commanded him to give the kiss of charity to the bishop whom he had deposed and restore him to his office; both of which he did, and better still, he remained a devoted, humble servant of Christ and of the church the remainder of his life. And we might ask, What is the essential difference between this work of Bernard and that of Paul overwhelming Elymas the sorcerer on the island of Cyprus with his electrifying charge. "Thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness," etc.; "And now behold the hand of the Lord is upon thee and thou shalt be blind not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness and he went about seeking some one to lead him by the hand" (Acts xiii:6-12). Do not the triumph of Bernard and the triumph of Paul both belong to the category of mighty works? Were not both of these miracles of faith wrought by men who were

“filled with the Holy Ghost.” And was the effect of Bernard’s rebuke of the haughty warrior any less marvellous than the effect of Paul’s rebuke of the wicked sorcerer a thousand years before? And do not the fruits of Bernard’s ministry prove that the age of miracles was not past when the last of the apostles of the first century died? And is it not a proof that Christ has come again when elect servants of His appear upon the scene and repeat His mighty works?

And when people who had been full of the spirit of bigotry or wickedness came to hear John Wesley preach in his calm way on some text about God’s mercy to the sinful; when they fell prostrate, as such people sometimes did, under an overwhelming conviction of sin, and soon rose again with radiant face to declare that they had become “new creatures in Christ Jesus”—what sort of psychical or spiritual phenomena was it that then appeared? Was not John Wesley then casting out devils in the name of Jesus and by the power of the Holy Ghost? Was he not, through the divine Spirit delivering those who had been “possessed”? And we read of St. Francis, that once, while in communion with God and the Unseen, he received a vision of coming revival, and of multitudes coming to his help; from which vision he went to his followers and said, “Be not discouraged, my dear children, because of the smallness of our numbers. Let not my simplicity nor yours alarm you; for God has shown me clearly that by His blessing He will spread this family of which He is the Father, into all parts of the world. I saw a great multitude coming to us, to take a similar habit, and to lead the same life. They came in great numbers, French, Spaniards, Germans, English, from almost every nation.” And he firmly believed that these would preach repentance, and tell of Jesus, to the nations

of Europe and beyond. And later on all of this came to pass. Was not this in St. Francis, a manifestation of the prophetic gift? Did it not imply the prophetic endowment and prophetic inspiration? And was not St. Francis proving the assurance of Jesus about the work of the Holy Spirit when He should come to teach? "He shall not speak from Himself: but what things soever He shall hear these shall He speak: and He shall declare unto you the things that are to come" (John xvi:13 R.V.)

And we should be in perfect harmony with the Scriptures if we should advance the claim of inspiration for John Wesley and the preachers who were fellow-laborers with him. The critics refer to the degradation of the masses of the English people in the times when John Wesley was a young man; and they note the improving moral conditions, and the new spirit of philanthropy that began to appear soon after John Wesley began his great work; and now these critics are united in saying that the work of Wesley and his associates was the means of saving England—critics of even fifty or sixty years ago were agreed on this. But John Wesley could see at the time that it was saving England. In other words John Wesley could see at the time what the majority of the critics could not see till fifty or sixty years after he was dead. The inner meaning of which is that John Wesley was a prophet. For what is a prophet? He is a man whose mind has arisen, usually by slow and painful degrees, through much questioning and chastening, and conflict, out of the region of tradition and prejudice and prevailing opinion, into the region of fact and reality and life, until at length he becomes possessed of direct spiritual insight, and is able to discern in what direction God's Providence is moving, and toward what end His Spirit is working, in the great tendencies and events of his

own day. And being thus possessed he speaks, because he is under a Heavenly compulsion to speak, and the promise is fulfilled that "your sons and daughters shall prophesy" when the Holy Spirit is poured out (Acts ii:17); "shall prophesy," or "magnify God" in testimony and in exhortation, with "the new tongue of love." This is what the early Methodist preachers did.

And at such times also wonderful instances of bodily healing occur; and not from mere nervous diseases or imaginary troubles either; but, at times, from deep-seated, baffling, organic disease. And it is quite in harmony with a rational and scientific conception of human nature that such things should be. It is absolutely proved by experience, and it is perfectly well known to medical men, that our bodily functions and our bodily health are wonderfully affected by our mental and spiritual condition; and therefore the miracle of healing is in the higher and fuller manifestation of spiritual force, and not in any contravening of natural laws. The Christian churches of modern times have largely neglected this great truth; and the teachings of the cult that commonly bears the name of "Christian Science," has grown on their neglect. In his notes, on James v:14 John Wesley says that healing through faith remained in the early church long after the other miraculous gifts had passed away; that "it seemed to have been designed to remain always"; and when it was lost at length, it was lost through unbelief.

And at such times of Divine visitation, the power to speak in tongues has been known to appear. We mean the gift of exalted, rapturous, ecstatic utterance of thoughts and feelings that had been latent and inexpressible in ordinary states. Occasionally the expression of such thoughts and feelings has been given in other forms than those of the subject's native speech. And we may add that if such

things really did appear under the spirit's workings nearly nineteen hundred years ago (see 1 Cor. chap. xiv); and if the powers of human nature are the same to-day as they were then; and the Divine Spirit is the same—then it is not at all unreasonable to assume that such spiritual phenomena might appear again under similar conditions in our day. It is not for us to say of what wonderful things our human nature is capable, when we rise to our utmost privileges in Christ. And in the latter chapters of this book, we shall see that, through divinely prepared and divinely annointed men, the Lord has visited our human race from time to time in history; has reproduced in them His life and His works in a degree; and has revealed to them anew such portions of His truth as were needed for their peculiar times. And thus the great spiritual gifts of the apostolic age, through such men and through their followers, have reappeared at times as miracles or signs. And so, with different thoughts from those of our premillennial friends, we also are looking for Christ's coming again; and His coming is our rejoicing also; and "our hope."

CHAPTER IV.

SOME MISLEADING TRANSLATIONS AND ERRONEOUS INTERPRETATIONS.

THE translators of our Authorized Version of the Bible have done a noble work in rendering its Sacred Scriptures from the original Hebrew and Greek into clear, dignified and expressive English speech. They were learned, devout and well-meaning men; but in some instances they show a lack of spiritual insight into the meaning of the passage which they undertake to translate. They were not infallible men; and their renderings are not always absolutely correct. In some instances they were biased by their own doctrinal views. They held Calvinistic views of the doctrines of salvation, and accordingly they rendered the words in Acts ii:47 "The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." The Revised Version has very properly changed this to the following: "And the Lord added to them daily those who were being saved." And the translators render the words in Hebrews x:38 "Now the just shall live by faith but if *any man* draw back my soul shall have no pleasure in him." The reader will note the words "any man" are in italic letters, to indicate that they are not in the original Greek. They were inserted by the translators to prevent the reader from thinking that this just or righteous man, who lives by faith, might possibly draw back; but this is the very thing which the writer to the Hebrews implies. The Revised Version changed this to the following: "My righteous one shall live by faith; but if he shrink back my soul shall have no pleasure in him."

There is another instance of what we consider biased translation in Acts xiii:48 "And as many as were ordained

to eternal life believed." This does not refer to the foreordination considered by the apostle in his great passages on Predestination in Romans viii:28-39 and Ephes. i:1-11. Dr. Whedon in his commentary on this verse says that it should be rendered, "As many as were disposed to eternal life believed." It refers to the eager predisposition of the Gentile people to the gospel which Paul preached, as we see by reading the three or four verses that precede. John Wesley on this verse remarks, "It is as if he had said "they believed whose hearts the Lord opened," as he expresses the same kind of ordination in Acts xvi:14. In these remarks we have, of course, no intention of calling up the questions that have divided people who hold Calvinistic views from people who hold Arminian views. The fact of occasional mistranslations is what we wish to prove, and the foregoing are three unmistakable instances of biased translation; and they prepare us to receive the fact that in their rendering of the passages of the Gospels about our Lord's coming again, the translators were influenced by uninspired views that had come down by traditions from the earlier times. In fact their minds were prepossessed by such views in such a degree that they, too, understood our Lord's figurative language as if it were literal; and they consequently failed completely to apprehend what he really meant; just as the disciples of old failed through a similar mistake; and their failure is reflected in two or three very unfortunate renderings that have done much to obscure this subject of Christ's coming again and to account for the misleading views.

For instance, the expression "the end of the world" should have been rendered "the end of the age" wherever it occurs in his teaching about His coming again, because our Lord means the end of an era, or period, or dispensa-

tion. For example Matt. xxiv:3 should have been translated thus: "When shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the age" or "When shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of Thy presence, and of the end of the age"; and in this particular case "the end of the age" means the end of the Jewish dispensation or Jewish age. In the original Greek language there are three different words meaning "world." One of these signifies the "inhabited world" and is the root of our word "ecumenical." The second signifies the world as a "scene of order and beauty," and is the root of our word "cosmic" or "cosmical." And the third word, αἰών (aion) means an age, and is the word used in the discourses in Matt. xiii and xxiv. We have this word "aeon" in our word "aeonian," for instance in Tennyson's lines:

"The sound of streams that, swift or slow
Draw down aeonian hills and sow
The dust of continents to be."*

Let us now make an application of this paragraph about "the end of the age." In 1 Tim. iv:1-2 we have the following words: "Now the Spirit saith expressly that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies having their conscience seared with a hot iron," etc. And in 2 Tim. iii:1-5 we have these words: "This know also that in the last days perilous [or grievous] times shall come, for men shall be lovers of their

*In a note on Hebrews chap. i:2, a celebrated author says, *Κοσμος* means "the material world in its order and beauty." The word *αἰων* means "the world as reflected in the mind of man and in the stream of his spiritual history"; and *δικοιμενη* means "the inhabited world." The reader will find the above note in Archdeacon Farrar's commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews.

own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, headstrong, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, having a form of Godliness, but denying the power thereof," etc. People who hold premillennial views refer to these verses and then point to conditions in our day, and say "look at the signs of the times"; look at "the decline of vital piety; at the worldliness of the Church"; "look at the abounding apostasy and unbelief; at the attacks on the Bible; at the prevalency of false teaching; at the growth of mischievous and misleading sects; at the corruption of political life; at the degradation of the people in the slums; at the horrors and desolations of the great war," etc., etc. "Is not all of this positive proof that we are living in the last days, and that the return of the Lord is drawing near, and things will never be any better till He comes back to reign"?

But we reply that such people do greatly err. They quote the Scriptures without regard to the historical surroundings; without regard to the occasions that called them forth. These words in the epistles to Timothy were fulfilled long ago. They were fulfilled "in the end of the age" indeed. To express it more fully, they were fulfilled in the closing years of the Jewish dispensation, in the end of the Jewish age. In other parts of the New Testament we find premonitions and warnings from the apostle, we get a view of the burden that was on his heart. He could see even before he died, that a period of apostasy and spiritual decline was already on the way; he could see that in that period there would arise misleading teachers who would be destitute of the true pastor's spirit of sacrifice and of loving, solicitous care, and full of the spirit of mischief and covet-

ousness and pride. Addressing the elders of the church at Ephesus according to Acts xx:29-30, he says, "I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you not sparing the flock, and from among your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them." He could see the corruptions in society, and the resulting strifes and woes that would follow after the church's spiritual life had decayed; and it was to conditions like these, which he could see were coming in his own day, that he refers, when he speaks in the epistles to Timothy of "the last days" and "the latter times." And passages from Peter's epistles confirm all of this. In 1 Peter iv:7-8 it says "the end of all things is at hand"; and in 2 Peter iii:3 the writer adds "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." Of course similar conditions appear in our time, and similar conditions have appeared in other times. They are likely to appear in the years that pass before the dawn of any new era for the human race. "The darkest hour is often just before the dawn." But the writers of 1 Timothy and 2 Peter were not referring to conditions in the twentieth century at all. They did not foresee what would be taking place in the twentieth century any more than King Alfred the Good in 871 A.D. to 901 A.D. foresaw the coming of Kaiser William and the great war. And we may add that all sorts of fanciful, far-fetched and absurd conclusions can be proved by such unhistorical and irrational methods as premillennial writers really adopt where they apply these words in Timothy and Peter to the twentieth century instead of to the first. Nearly sixty years ago there was in circula-

tion a book by a Wesleyan minister which proved to his own complete satisfaction, no doubt, that the Crimean war and the Great Russian power were predicted and set forth in the writings of Ezekiel the Prophet, especially in two passages about the hosts of Gog and Magog marshalling themselves for the great war. This Wesleyan minister was following on the same lines as premillennial writers use. Well meaning men are giving free rein to the imagination and suspending the exercise of reason altogether when they follow such methods of interpretation and give us such conclusions as the above.

Another unfortunate and misleading translation occurs in the use of the word "angels," which should be "messengers" wherever it occurs in our Lord's teaching on His coming again. For instance Matt. xxv:31 is given thus: "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory and all the holy angels with Him," etc. It should have been: "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory and all the holy [or devoted] messengers with Him," meaning human messengers or men with a message or men divinely sent. The corresponding word, *αγγελοι* in the original Greek means simply "messengers." It may be human messengers or it may be celestial messengers; the translator or the reader of the Greek Scriptures must judge from the context which meaning the writer intends. In more than one hundred places in which the word occurs in the Greek Scriptures of the Old Testament it is rendered "messengers" in the corresponding places in our English Bible, and means human messengers. For instance in the following: "Jacob sent messengers to Esau" (Genesis xxiii:3-6); "Saul sent messengers to David" (1 Sam. xix:14, 15, 16, 19); "Hiram, King of Tyre, sent messengers to David" (1 Chron. xiv:1 and xix:16); "Rabshakeh sent messengers to Hezekiah"

(Isaiah xxxvii:9); "John the Baptist sent messengers to Jesus" (Luke vii:24). In these one hundred and more places the word cannot mean anything else than human messengers; and yet our translators have rendered this word "angels" in the passages in the gospel about Christ's coming again, and thereby have obscured the meaning altogether. They might as well have said "Jacob sent angels to Esau; or "Saul sent angels to David," etc. The mistake would have been more evident, but it would have been not more certainly a mistake.

And now the reader is requested to turn to some of the verses in which this word "angels" unfortunately, and we believe erroneously, occurs. Let him turn for instance to Matt. xxiv:31 and substitute the word "messengers," and see what a wealth of new and practical meaning is opened up at once; and how much nearer and simpler the coming of Christ becomes to us; and how much better it harmonizes with the methods of God's providence as seen in history, and as seen in His presence in the movements of to-day. Instead of "He shall send forth His 'angels' with a great sound of a trumpet and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other," read thus, "He shall send forth His 'messengers' with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds," etc. This means that He shall send forth His messengers with a great proclamation that shall be resounded till it reaches the ends of the civilized world. For instance, in the first century after the destruction of Jerusalem, the Christian teachers and evangelists, filled with the enthusiasm of a divine life, went in every direction declaring "Jesus is divine"; "We will not adore the gods of Rome"; "We will not 'worship the beast and his image'"; "We will not re-

nounce Christ and bow down to the Roman power"; "Jesus hominum Salvator," (Jesus is the Saviour of men). And these men, not "angels," were the messengers who gathered together God's chosen people, or elect, from the four winds of heaven (in other words, from all parts of the known world) into societies or groups; who worshipped in secret places; in private homes; or in the catacombs of Rome, or wherever else they might. And in the great revival of evangelical religion in the eighteenth century, John Wesley and the Methodist preachers and their sympathizers in other denominations were the "messengers" who "lifted up their voice like a trumpet," proclaiming salvation through faith for the penitent to the ends of the earth, and gathering those who were disposed into "the societies" for edification and exhortation and prayer.

And thus we see new meaning in, and new occasion for, our Lord's repeated warnings, "Be ye also ready," "Watch therefore for ye know not the day nor the hour when the Son of Man cometh," "What I say unto one I say unto all 'watch' " (Matt. xxiv:44, xxv:13, Mark xiii:37). Our present age or period is passing away, a new era for the race is about to dawn. Let those who profess to be Christ's followers, and who bear His name be on their guard: let them "watch and pray," lest a new spiritual visitation come suddenly, a visitation for which they are not prepared, ushered in by a new proclamation which they will not understand, and calling for new tests or surrenders, to which they are not willing to submit.

And there is still another erroneous translation to which we must refer, namely, that in John xiv:2 "In my Father's house are many mansions if it were not so I would have told you, I go to prepare a place for you." We almost hesitate to touch these words because they have been cher-

ished by so many as one of the "precious promises" of Christ. They have been enshrined so long in the hearts of people who love God, and who, in times of sorrow and struggle, naturally take comfort in the assurance that there is a better world than this. And they take it for granted that this text gives the proof. Their assurance is well founded, but they err in their interpretation of this particular verse. The devout reader may perhaps pause regretfully when we state that it is unfortunate that the word "mansions" ever got into this verse. It was transferred into it from a Latin version of the Scriptures, called the Vulgate. This version is generally used by priests of the Roman Catholic Church. The true reading is given in the margin of the Revised Version, "In my Father's house are *many abiding places*, if it were not so I would have told you," and this rendering agrees with our Lord's real meaning as we shall see by looking at the passage thoughtfully, and by comparing it with His words in the context, and with other parts of the Word of God. The old rendering, with its word "mansions," from which some good people infer so much, appears to be somewhat self-contradictory when we look at it in a critical way. We have seen some mansions that were large enough to hold two or three houses, but we are out of harmony with our necessary rules of thought when we speak of mansions in a house. The larger edifice might contain the smaller one; but the smaller cannot contain the larger. Here is a confusion of figures at the start. Moreover, in other parts of the Holy Scriptures, Heaven is never represented once as our Heavenly Father's house. Heaven is better represented as a city. In the Scriptures Our Father's house means the temple in Jerusalem as God's special place of abode, as when Jesus overturned the tables of the money changers, and said "make

not My Father's house a house of merchandise" (John ii:16).

But in a larger sense our Father's house means God's universal church, "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone." (See Ephesians ii:20-21.) The meaning of the verse "In my Father's house are many abiding places" is explained by another verse, viz., that in Rev. ii:12 "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God *and he shall go no more out*"; in other words, he shall have "*an abiding place.*" And John xiv:1-3 means about the same as if Jesus had said: "Let not your heart be troubled, my faithful disciples who, in your personal devotion, have followed me to the last. Moses, Elijah, Isaiah, Hezekiah, Jeremiah and others are pillars in God's temple; they have an abiding place, and the results of their works remain; and you also, Peter and James and John and the rest of you, shall have 'an abiding place' in God's universal church; I go to prepare a place for you; which means that though I am no longer with you in the body, I am with you in a spiritual sense. I am overseeing, planning, arranging for you still. I am leading you, and am preparing your providential place." As He states in the following chapter: "Ye have not chosen me but I have chosen you" and *placed* you, or "appointed you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain." It is not "I have chosen you and ordained you," etc., as the Authorized Version says. This, by the way, is another misleading translation, which the Revised Version, fortunately, corrects (John xv:16). In ancient times, the Angel of the Covenant went before God's people to bring them into the Promised land. Exodus xxiii:21 reads "Behold I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, to bring thee to the

place which I have prepared." And this Angel was divine, for the next verse reads, "Provoke Him not, for He will not pardon your transgressions; for my name is in Him." Only the Divine Being would be spoken of as pardoning transgressions. Only the Divine Being could "prepare a place" for so great a people, with so great a mission. Does not this Angel mean the Eternal Spirit of Christ? And are we not right in saying that Jesus Christ, "the same yesterday, to-day and forever," who prepared a place for Israel, still goes before His people as of old, and prepares their Providential Place for them? And is not the foregoing a very simple, scriptural and reasonable explanation of John xiv:2?

And Jesus proceeds to say, "And if I go and prepare a place for you *I will come again*, and receive you unto myself that where I am there ye may be also" (John xiv:3); which does not mean "I will come again and take you up into a fine palace in the heavenly world," but, "I will come again and lift you up to a similar fullness of spiritual life; and a similar altitude of spiritual vision; and a corresponding degree of spiritual power; and to a similar judgment throne. (See Matt. xix:28 and Rev. iii:21.)* You shall represent me in the world, and shall reproduce my life, and shall continue the work which I have begun; as He goes on to explain in verses 12 and 20, "Verily, verily, I say unto you he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do because I go to my Father." "And in that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." As John Ruskin says, "The perpetual sense of the helpful presence of the Deity is the source of all heroic strength, in

* The reader will find the explanation of Matt. xix:28 and Rev. iii:21 in the Chapter on "The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats."

battle, in exile, and in the valley of the shadow of death." So it is with men like Paul, Bernard of Clairvaux, St. Francis of Assisi, Luther, Melancthon, Wesley, Whitefield, who have obtained the fullness of the spiritual life. *We* who are in the lower stages of faith: *we* who are overshadowed at times with doubts and fears—believe that there is a Providence in such men's appearing, with exactly the right endowments, at the very time when they are needed, as if they came like the comets when they were due. But *they* are in the secrets; *they* know that they are elect and Providential men; and this assurance gives them the spirit of the Conqueror; gives them a force and courage, which the undiscerning world acknowledges and marvels at, but cannot understand. They have been received unto Himself in the present life. They are along with Him, they are co-operating with Him in His redeeming, regenerating work on earth, and they are inwardly conscious of the fact.

In illustration of this issue of the experience of such tried and faithful men in a triumphant and verified assurance, we may add two or three verses from our great poet Robert Browning, who must have had a great Prophet-like experience himself in order to be able to write what he has given in some of his poems. In the early part of his poem on Rabbi Ben Ezra, he speaks of his perplexed musing, in the earlier stages of his experience, over the forces of nature that appear to operate according to immutable law whether human suffering or right be involved or not, and he suggests that it is the highest wisdom

"To welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough."

But at length his experience reaches the culmination indicated in the following lines:—

“Let us not always say
 ‘Spite of this flesh, to-day
 I strove, made way, gained ground upon the whole!’
 As the bird wings and sings,
 Let us cry, ‘All good things
 Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more
 Now, than flesh helps soul.’

“Therefore I summon age
 To grant youth’s heritage,
 Life’s struggle having so far reached its term:
 Thence shall I pass, approved,
 A man, for aye removed
 From the developed brute; a God,
 Though in the germ.”

And he gives another outcome of this “Life’s struggle” in the lines that occur further on in the poem:—

“Enough now, if the Right,
 And Good and Infinite
 Be named here, as thou callest thine hand thine own,
 With knowledge absolute,
 Subject to no dispute
 From fools that crowded youth nor let thee feel alone.”

These three verses from Browning are no doubt original with him: but they simply give beautiful poetic expression to the same truth as our Lord has given in John xvi:23-24. “In that day” [the day of spiritual visitation for you] “you shall not question me as to any thing.” “Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father He shall give it to you in my name.” (See margin of English Revised Version.) And this assurance of being on the solid ground of verified truth, this life in a higher

attitude that is never overcast with clouds, this consciousness of divine indwelling power, this sense of spiritual pre-eminence as the real representatives of Christ on earth, is what our Lord refers to when He says, "I will come again and receive you into myself that where I am there ye may be also," not locally, but spiritually: not as dwellers in the same literal mansions in the other sphere, but as sharers in the same heavenly joy in the present sphere. It is by such spiritual visitations that the men of faith come at length to "be with Him where He is." (See also John xv:11 and Matt. xxv:21.) And these privileges of spiritual communion and indwelling joy are for people in the humble ranks, as well as for the renowned. The humble also may have the fullness, and may live in the assurance of an abiding place in God's universal Church.

Some people may think that it is too bad, even in the interest of truth, to spoil an old interpretation which in the past has given so much comfort to the weary and devout, and which has been crystallized in some of the most precious hymns, hymns which Christian people of every denomination sing, as for instance, Phoebe Carey's hymn,

"One sweetly solemn thought
Comes to me o'er and o'er,
I am nearer my home to-day,
Than I have been before.
Nearer my Father's House
Where the many mansions be,
Nearer the great white throne,
Nearer the crystal sea."

But we reply that all of the essential truth which was supposed to be in the old translation, can be found in other places in the Scriptures: for instance in Phil. i:23 where Paul in his imprisoned state says "I am in a strait betwixt

two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ which is far better"; and in Luke's Gospel, where Jesus said to the dying thief "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." These Scriptures assure us that believers dying go at once to be with Christ, and that assurance should be enough. And we may add that certainly the old interpretation of John xiv:2 is out of harmony with our Lord's line of thought. It abruptly introduces a materialistic conception of the abode of the saints in a future world. It forces this conception into a discourse about the Holy Spirit's work in a present world. While on the other hand the interpretation which we have given involves no irrelevancy; suggests no digression; means no inharmonious change of thought—but fits into the occasion and into the framework of the discourse in a natural and self-consistent way: and surely real Christian disciples will prefer to receive and know what our Lord really meant, rather than cling to the old interpretation which is often used by premillennialist teachers as proof that Christ will come again in their sense, to claim His church, that is to say, "to claim His bride" and "receive her unto Himself," and carry her up "to meet the Lord in the air"; the work of the Holy Spirit, the other Comforter, or Advocate (see John xvi:7) having proved a failure upon this earth, the world having become worse and worse and worse in spite of all that He does to regenerate and restrain.

It is interesting to note that the words in 1 Cor. ii:9 are misinterpreted in a similar way. The verse reads thus, "But as it is written, eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him"; and these words are commonly supposed to refer solely to inconceivable conditions of felicity provided for the saints, and reserved

for their enjoyment in a future glorious abode. Sometimes clergymen use these words as a text for a funeral service, and appear to understand them in this way; and some hymn writers too have done something to impress and adorn, and therefore, to perpetuate the erroneous view, as the reader may see for himself from the following attractive lines from Henry Alford's pen:

"Glories upon glories
Hath our God prepared,
By the souls that love Him
One day to be shared;

"Eye hath not beheld them,
Ear hath never heard;
Nor of these hath uttered
Thought or speech a word.

"Forward, marching eastward
Where the Heaven is bright,
Till the veil is lifted,
Till our faith be sight."

But this verse from Paul occurs in a chapter in which he is dwelling upon quite a different theme. He is here writing about the Holy Spirit's work in believers while they are in the present world; he is speaking of the power which the Spirit gives the maturer class of Christians: the power to discern the marvellous realities of the spiritual life, the power to see and understand things that are undiscernible and unknowable to a man in the natural or unregenerated state. This verse occurs first in Isaiah lxiv:4. But neither Isaiah nor Paul has the slightest reference to the future life. The very next verse (1 Cor. ii:10) referring to these things which "eye hath not seen nor ear heard," says "But God *hath* revealed them unto us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God." The

revealing had already taken place. They had known it already in their hearts. The old interpretation of John xiv:3, and the common interpretation of 1 Cor. ii:9, arise from the fact that deep spiritual experiences, and direct spiritual insight, are somewhat rare among men. To the majority they are too great to be considered possible, and too good to be considered true; consequently there is a common propensity to refer them to a future state and to an ideal or heavenly world; whereas they were "prepared" by the Heavenly Father to be enjoyed by the believer in the present life.

Paul's words in 1 Cor. ii:7-12 are a precious heritage to the spiritually mature. They mean essentially the same as the words of Jesus "where I am there ye may be also" in John xiv:3. According to John xii:26 Jesus says "If any man serve Me let him follow Me, and where I am there shall also My servant be." But in this verse Jesus seems to refer to being with Him in the experience of self-crucifixion, in humble positions, or in painful or lonely or unappreciated service, or even in the experience of martyrdom itself. But in the other passages Jesus and Paul refer to being with Christ in exalted spiritual privileges, in divine illuminations, in infinite outlook, in fullness of joy. In this way the spiritually mature are made "to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" according to Paul in Ephesians, chap. ii:2.

CHAPTER V.

THE PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS.

WE have set forth the view that Christ's coming means a spiritual visitation or new "manifestation of His Presence" (2 Thess. ii:8) after a period of moral and spiritual decline. We claim this is the evident meaning of His words; and we now proceed to show how beautifully this more spiritual view of His coming agrees with the parables of the Ten Virgins, the Importunate Widow, the Wheat and the Tares, and the Servants waiting for their Lord. And we shall show how it agrees with other figurative statements beside the parables mentioned, and with certain of His literal statements as well. We shall refer to many facts taken from the histories of the great religious revivals and moral reformations of the past. And we shall see how perfectly the various parts of these parables harmonize with the facts, and what wonderful illustrations they really are. Incidentally we shall see how difficult it is to explain these parables according to the premillennial view. In some places we shall see how the most natural and evident interpretation of them excludes and refutes that view. We shall see more clearly that that view is out of harmony with Scripture and with facts.

In His early meditations on the history of His race, before His public ministry began, the views of Jesus became clearer and clearer as He advanced in years. (Luke ii:52.) He came to see the laws of universal progress and universal life. He saw that the cause of righteousness and truth advances by periods of revival followed by periods of decline. Under the great Prophet and leader Moses, that cause received a mighty impulse onward; but at the end of

the period of the Judges it was in a state of woeful decay. Then the great Prophet and organizer Samuel appeared, and the cause received another mighty uplift and inspiration which continued and became augmented in King David's time. Then followed another period of moral decline, degeneracy and decay, culminating in a terrible collapse and disaster in the time of the Prophet Jeremiah. But at length, after the Exile, the cause received another new start under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah, and the Prophets Zechariah and Haggai, and God's chosen people began again with the advantage of all the lessons of the failures and the chastisements of the past; and the Jewish race after that became the great missionaries of the true religion in the ancient world. But in the time of Jesus spiritual life was again at a very low ebb among the religious leaders, and Jesus could see that another collapse and disaster was not very far off; a collapse and disaster more terrible than had ever visited the Jewish people in the past. In perfect harmony with the fact of His Incarnation, and consistently with certain human limitations of His knowledge, He could see this approaching collapse. He could see it as clearly as the great prophet Jeremiah, who was not The Divine Man, could foresee the approaching destruction of Jerusalem in his day. And Jesus also saw that the cause of true religion would have another new beginning after the destruction of Jerusalem; a new beginning under a mightier inspiration, with a larger heritage of truth, with more impressive and momentous lessons from the past, and without the restrictions and limitations of the earlier periods. It has been suggested, as we have noticed before, that at times in His ministry Jesus thought that the final catastrophe of the human race was not far off, and that He had nothing else in view in giving

such parables as the Ten Virgins, the Importunate Widow, the Wheat and the Tares, etc.; but we cannot conceive of this as being a correct view. Knowing that the old law of moral progress would still continue, that spiritual upliftings and higher moral teachings and standards would still be followed by periods of moral degeneracy and decay, that new leaders, long in preparation but sudden in appearing, would still be raised up by Providence as of old, Jesus would only think, we repeat, of the approaching dissolution of the Jewish state as a new beginning for the cause of righteousness and truth; a new beginning resembling in minor respects the start received in the life of Moses; a new beginning with the spiritual conquest of the whole human race as its object; a new beginning with a longer period in which to run, inasmuch as it had vastly greater results to achieve. There is no inherent improbability in our assumption that Jesus would foresee all of this. And Jesus illustrates these laws of moral progress, and these periods of moral and spiritual decay, and these new appearances of prepared and illuminated men. He illustrates them perfectly, in the parables which we are about to explain.

We have stated that the coming or Divine Visitation of which our Lord speaks in Matt. xxiv was fulfilled in the outbreak of Christianity as a spiritual force in the old Roman empire after Jerusalem was destroyed. This is the fulfilment which He particularly had in view; and we should have liked to draw our illustrations from the events of that particular time; but we are sorry that we cannot do so on account of the lack of any complete or authentic history of the progress of Christianity during that time. Neander, the learned and devout German historian of the Christian Church, states that from the time that Luke ceased writing the Acts of the Apostles, for a period of

seventy-five years, we have no reliable sources of information, nor should the lack of sources for this part of Christian history be surprising to any one; and with this statement Christian historians in general agree. Heathen writers of that period relate a little about the persecution of the Christians, but they do not furnish us with material for the illustration of our subject; so we shall have to take our illustrations chiefly from the history of religious movements, and of moral and social revolutions, in the middle ages and in modern times.

We begin then with the exposition of the parable of the Ten Virgins (Matt. xxv:1-10) "Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened unto ten virgins which took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps." *The wise were possessed of an inward and spiritual grace but the foolish were lacking in that grace.* "While the bridegroom tarried they all slumbered and slept." They were all insensible and undiscerning in regard to the nature of the events that were impending. Martin Luther in his early days had not the faintest thought that he would ever be the leader of the great Protestant Reformation. He was a devout Roman Catholic and truly loyal to the church authorities at Rome; and John Wesley had not the faintest thought of ever becoming the leader of a great evangelical revival. He was a staunch high churchman, strictly scrupulous in observing all the forms and ceremonies of the church. These men and their associates were like persons in slumber *or in dreams* in regard to the work they were yet to do, and the events that were on their way. "And at midnight there is heard a cry Behold the bridegroom cometh,

go ye out to meet him." The reader will note, it is at midnight, in the darkest hour of the time, when earnest and good men are saying "what is the world coming to," when the multitudes have lapsed into immorality and irreligion, when the church, in a great degree, has lost its salutary and uplifting influence, when the social and religious problems of the time are baffling, and to human appearance insoluble; at midnight, there is heard the cry "Behold the bridegroom cometh," in other words, there is heard some great proclamation that reaches every ear, and whose meaning is "the Spiritual Kingdom is coming in the new times." It was so in modern Europe in the early part of the sixteenth century. Every reader of history knows the main facts. There had been a great broadening of intelligence among the people. The Fall of Constantinople before the Turks in 1451 A.D. had scattered its learned men and had brought them into the universities of Europe; the recent invention of the art of printing had assisted in the spread of knowledge, and the report of the discovery of a western world by Columbus in 1492, had quickened the imaginations of men; but much moral corruption existed in society in general, and as Roman Catholic writers admit,* there were shameful immoralities in Rome at the very headquarters of the church itself. But the crowning error was the sale of indulgences or paper documents, by the purchase of which the people were promised the pardon of sins that had been committed in the past, and in the abuses of these indulgences they were sometimes offered pardon even for sins that might be committed in days to come. There was great need of reformation but who was to lead the way? Even

* On the deplorable condition of the Church before the Reformation the reader is referred to Macaulay's essay on "Ranke's History of the Popes."

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so recently as 1498 A.D. Savonarola, the eloquent social and political reformer of Florence, had been put to death for preaching against corruptions and errors that prevailed. Who would dare to run the risk of a similar fate by uttering a similar denunciation or taking a similar stand? Martin Luther was the man. He had come through a profound spiritual experience in which he had discovered the doctrine of *justification by faith*, through the teachings of the New Testament, and through this discovery he had obtained great comfort and peace; and when he heard of the people being deluded and defrauded by the sale of indulgences by a delegate from Rome, his indignation was stirred, and he wrote on the church door at Wittenberg ninety-five theses, the purport of which was that "an indulgence can remit a penalty which the church has imposed, but it cannot remit a penalty which God has imposed; that the Pope himself cannot pardon sin, only God Himself can do that; and that the Christian who has true repentance has already obtained pardon from God apart from the indulgence, and consequently does not need one." And this proclamation by Martin Luther electrified the people of Germany and the nations of Europe. It was an outburst of light that lit up the whole heavens, relieved the darkness of earth, dispelled illusions and brought reality into view. It was a perfect fulfilment of our Lord's words "As the lightning that lighteneth out of one part under heaven, and shineth even to the other part under heaven, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be in His day," or "so shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed" (*Luke xvii:24 and 30 and Matt. xxiv:27*). In a few days the news of the proclamation had gone all over Germany, and in three weeks it had reached Rome, which was very rapid communication for those days when there were no telegraph lines and no railway express trains.

"Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps." They all began to adjust themselves to the new conditions that had been brought about by this proclamation. "And the foolish said unto the wise give us of your oil for our lamps are going out." (See Revised Version.) In other words the old ceremonies, the old formulas, the old traditions, and even the old doctrines, although they are still good, have lost their power to attract and uplift. Truths that were revelations less than a century ago are common possessions of the people of to-day, and have not the same application to changed conditions in a later time. As James Russell Lowell says again—

"New occasions teach new duties,
Time makes ancient good uncouth;
They must upward still and onward
Who would keep abreast of truth."

And now the multitudes are instinctively drawn to these new social and religious reformers and revivalists who have a message that meets the needs of the new times. They listen with eager attention to the new "messengers" (not "angels") whom Providence has sent; and these reformers or revivalists have been called to be the messengers because they have the "inward grace." Verse 9 "But the wise answered saying not so, lest there be not enough for us and you; but go ye rather to them that sell and buy for yourselves."

This statement illustrates the truth that no one has any superfluous grace, no one has any of his own to give away; and just as "each one of us must give an account of himself to God," so each one must go himself to the divine source, in humility, confession, and prayer, in order to obtain the inward grace which alone can make one fit to enter into the privileges of Christ's Kingdom on this earth.

This is a doctrine of evangelical religion that requires to be taught and applied in every age; but it was particularly appropriate in Reformation times. There was special need then to teach that divine grace is not to be obtained from any clergyman, or bishop, or priest, or saint, however much any of these may do to awaken or help us in the religious life by words of instruction or exhortation or appeal. Nothing can be a substitute for direct and immediate dealings between the individual soul and God. "Go ye rather to them that sell and buy for yourselves." Verse 10 "And while they went to buy the bridegroom came"; while they were professedly seeking divine favor by their outward works, or by penances, or by observances of ceremonial laws, while they were trying to promote the cause of religion, as they understood it, with diligence and zeal, they were like the Jews of old who had a zeal for God but not according to knowledge. But meanwhile time was passing, and the Spiritual Kingdom, announced in the resounding proclamation, was fully ushered in, and they that were ready went in with the bridegroom to the marriage feast (R.V.); and those religious ones, who had zeal without knowledge, and works without grace, were unfit to enter in.

Now the marriage feast signifies the blessings of the gospel or the enjoyments of those who enter into the Spiritual Kingdom, or Kingdom of God on earth; it means the privilege of knowing the divine favor; and the joys of inward communion with God; and of receiving new revelations of His truth and love. And in Matt. xxii:1-13 we have a whole parable about a marriage feast for a king's son. The teaching of this parable is that the Jewish race, as God's peculiar, privileged people, would receive the first invitation to the gospel feast; but some, through sordid motives, would neglect it and others with a malevolent

spirit, would reject it. After this the invitation would be given to the unprivileged, neglected and outcast races of the Gentile world. The privileges and blessings of the Spiritual Kingdom would be offered to them without money and without price. Matt. xxii:7 says "and the King [God the Father] sent forth his armies and destroyed those murderers [the Jews] and burned up their city [Jerusalem]."

This was Christ's prediction, forty years before the event, of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman armies under the Providence of God. And the parable proceeds: "Then saith He to the servants, The wedding is ready but they that were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways and as many as ye shall find bid to the marriage feast." (See Revised Version.) This was Christ's prediction, in definite though figurative language, that the privileges and enjoyments of the Spiritual Kingdom would be offered in a universal invitation to the foreigners or heathen whom the Jewish people had despised. And now in the parable of the Ten Virgins we have "the Marriage Feast" again. And this "Marriage Feast" of course signifies the same thing as in the other parable; it signifies the new offer of the gospel to the hungering masses of common people when the Spiritual Kingdom comes in the new times. In this they agree, although the main lessons of the two parables are not the same. "And they that were ready went in with him to the Marriage Feast." (See the Revised Version again.) Now since the parable of the Ten Virgins was delivered to illustrate the Coming of Christ the Heavenly Bridegroom in His Kingdom, an event which "some who were standing by" would live to see, and since the Spiritual Kingdom or Kingdom of God, means a reign of God in human society on earth, or heavenly conditions

brought down to earth, the reader will see another proof, an incidental proof, that Christ's teachings about His coming again were fulfilled in a great spiritual visitation; we mean that spiritual visitation which brought the free and universal gospel to the Gentile races, the visitation that came with the messengers of the King to those in the highways, the neglected and the lost. This visitation came according to the parable, after Jerusalem was destroyed. The destruction of Jerusalem, we repeat, removed the greatest obstacle of the universal gospel out of the way. It destroyed the power of that bigoted, narrow-minded Jewish party in the church, the party that insisted that circumcision was the only way of entering in, the party that persistently endeavored to unsettle the churches founded by Paul.* When Christ thus came to the old Roman world, when the universal gospel was thus proclaimed, then was fulfilled an important part of the parable of the Ten Virgins, namely, "They that were ready went in with Him to the marriage feast"; though the words "they that were ready," in this parable do not refer to the general mass, but to elect ones who had been called in order that they might call the rest. The parable about Christ coming in His Kingdom as the Heavenly Bridegroom and about His coming being consummated in a marriage feast, and the other parable about the invitation of the Jewish people, and afterwards of the Gentile races, to the marriage feast, are two different

* On the influence of that narrow-minded Jewish party in the church the thoughtful reader will note that this party which professed to be truly Christian, and numbered "tens of thousands" according to Professor Weymouth's translation of Acts xxi:20 was "zealous for the law" and charged Paul with "apostacy from Moses." (See Acts xxi:21 in the Greek.) Later on the Ebionites, who had the same mental attitude, rejected all of Paul's epistles on the ground that he was "an apostate from the law."

parables and illustrate different truths; but the meaning of the marriage feast in each parable is the same, and thus the comparison of the parables helps to illustrate the doctrine of the coming of the Lord. Christ came again as the Heavenly Bridegroom, in a great spiritual visitation, to usher in the Spiritual Kingdom, or new reign of God in human society; and to give the blessings of the gospel, or privileges of the marriage feast, to the Gentile races of the world. In the foregoing sentences we blend the essential meaning of the two parables into one.

But we have already noted that Christ's words are statements of universal law, and that they are fulfilled again and again in human history; and these statements about the people in general, and about the leaders in the church in particular, entering into the marriage feast, or receiving the blessings of the Gospel, were fulfilled again in Reformation times. The spiritual nature of the people of that time had been starving on mere traditions, and on the penances and ceremonial observances appointed or commanded by the church; they were hungering for some message from the Word of God about the Way, the Truth, the Life; and Martin Luther* was the man who had been prepared to satisfy their needs. He had been enlightened by the Word of God when he was seeking pardon and peace himself, and he had been further taught by the Holy Spirit through disappointing and painful experiences of life. As he had sprung from the common people, he had a fellow feeling with them, and deep sympathy with them in their needs; and he took them into his confidence, and by means of his pamphlets and tracts he kept them informed of his movements and showed them the way to God through Christ in

* The reader will find interesting estimates of Luther under NOTE A in the Appendix of the end of this book.

such passages as the following which we have taken from his Table Talk :

"The Holy Scripture is the best and highest book of God, full of comfort in all manner of trials and temptations; for it teaches of Faith and Hope and Love, far otherwise than by human reason and understanding can be comprehended. And in times of trouble and vexation it teaches how these virtues should light and shine; it teaches also that after this poor and miserable life, there is another which is everlasting.

"The chief lesson and study in Divinity is, well and rightly to learn to know Christ, for He is therein very friendly and familiarly pictured unto us. From hence St. Peter saith: Grow up in the knowledge of Christ; and Christ Himself also teacheth that we should learn to know Him only out of the Scriptures, where He saith: Search the Scriptures, for they do testify of me. We ought not to measure, censure and understand the Scriptures according to our own natural sense and reason, but we ought diligently by prayer, to meditate therein, and to search after the same. The devil and temptations also do give occasion unto us somewhat to learn and understand the Scriptures by experience and practice. Without trials and temptations we should never understand anything thereof; no, not although we diligently read and heard the same. The Holy Ghost must be the only master and tutor to teach us therein, and let youth and scholars not be ashamed to learn of this tutor. When I find myself in temptation, then I quickly lay hold and fasten on some text in the Bible which Christ Jesus lays before me, namely, THAT HE DIED FOR ME, from whence I have and receive comfort. Above all things let us be sure that the doctrine which we teach is God's word; for when we are sure of that, then we may build thereupon and know that this cause shall and must remain."

And Luther's great hymn "Ein feste burg ist unser Gott," written in circumstances of personal danger and tribulation, took hold of the popular imagination, and still takes hold of the general heart of mankind :

"A mighty fortress is our God,
A bulwark never failing;
Our helper He amid the flood
Of mortal ills prevailing.

For still our ancient foe
Doth seek to work us woe;
His craft and power are great,
And armed with cruel hate,
On earth is not his equal.

"Did we in our own strength confide,
Our striving would be losing;
Were not the right Man on our side
The Man of God's own choosing,
Do'st ask who that may be?
Christ Jesus it is He;
Lord Sabaoth is His name,
From age to age the same,
And He must win the battle.

"That word above all earthly Powers—
No thanks to them—abideth:
The spirit and the gifts are ours
Through Him who with us sideth.
Let goods and kindred go,
This mortal life also;
The body they may kill;
God's truth abideth still,
His kingdom is forever."

By scattering such great Scripture truths as these among the people the Spiritual Kingdom in the early part of the sixteenth century was ushered in; the heavenly banquet was spread, and the elect leaders who had been specially invited, and were ready when the proclamation sounded forth, and the common people who were also called, rejoiced in partaking of the manna from above. and the words of the great Prophet Isaiah were again fulfilled, "And in this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things, full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined" (Isaiah xxv:16). But time speeds on; the midnight cry,

the resounding proclamation becomes a memory. The season of opportunity for the foolish virgins, the leaders who were not ready, passes away. Their little day of life on earth comes to an end. Eternity draws near. The period of debating and indecision, and earthly probation is past, the awful words of destiny are spoken "and the door is shut." And now the earthly part of the drama of the parable is closed, and there appears next the opening of a new scene in another sphere in which the marriage feast of gospel enjoyments is consummated and perpetuated in the countless company of the redeemed. This is the consummation which the writer of Revelation saw in the heavenly world, "And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb" (Rev. xix:9). Verses 11 and 12, "Afterward came also the other virgins saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us, But He answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not."

Now we must remember that a parable can illustrate truth only at its main or essential points. We must not try to press every particular part of the parable or story into the service of illustration; we must not try to find an exact parallel in every part to the facts or truths that are to be made clear. In this parable the main points are that Christ, the Heavenly Bridegroom, comes to the church in these great visitations of history; that He comes suddenly with a great proclamation, after a long, trying, testing period of waiting and delay; that He finds some in the church with hearts ready to respond to the new teaching and the new appeal, and He finds others in it who through lack of inward and spiritual grace, are unresponsive and unprepared. But in this parable the number of the prepared and of the unprepared is five, they are exactly equal; but this is not intended

to teach that the number of those prepared and of those not prepared for the great spiritual visitations of history is exactly equal, too; nor does it mean that the number of those who will be finally saved will be exactly equal to the number of those who will be finally lost. Again, the inference might be drawn that after the door was closed the other virgins, having bought some oil, came *all together in a body* expecting to enter in. Such an inference would not be correct. This part of the parable is not minutely parallel to the actual facts of life. The meaning is that as the persons represented by these foolish virgins were called one by one, each at his particular time, through death, into the other sphere, they were refused admittance and found themselves, to their surprise, among the cast away; because, for one thing, they were too late. "The harvest was past, the summer was ended, and they were not saved"; and because, for another thing, they had never had the inward grace of true humility, nor the power of the spiritual life. They were formalists and ceremonialists and worshippers of creed. They were possessed by the Pharisee spirit and temper, even if they belonged to a later age. They belong to the same list as that referred to in Matt. vii:22-23 "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name have cast out devils, and in Thy name done many wonderful works. Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you. Depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." They never succeeded in purchasing the oil after they went away. Even in the latter part of life they never obtained it, no matter how good some of their outward works may have appeared to be. If they had obtained the inward grace, even in the latter part of life, the Lord would not have said "I *never* knew you," but would have received them at the last even as, at the last

hour, He received the dying thief, because He saw in him some moral fitness in his openness of mind and his disposition to be penitent for his sins. But these persons go through their probationary period of life on earth thinking that they are the favored of God, but at the very entrance to the other sphere, there comes to them a terrible revelation. They had thought that they were all right; they find out that they were all wrong; "and the door is shut," and it is too late. "There are no pardons in the tomb and brief is mercy's day." To individuals who have had such opportunities as theirs, how fitting are Alfred Tennyson's impressive lines,

"Late, late, so late! and dark the night and chill!
Late, late, so late! But we can enter still.
'Too late, too late! Ye cannot enter now.'

"No light had we:—for that we do repent,
And learning this the Bridegroom will relent.
'Too late, too late! Ye cannot enter now.'

"No light! so late! and dark and chill the night
O, let us in, that we may find the light.
'Too late! too late! Ye cannot enter now.'"

"Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh." "Therefore be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh." This is the practical lesson of the parable; and for us it means as follows: In the days of moral and spiritual decline; when the fires of religious life and enthusiasm are burning low; and the gay are seeking pleasure; and the acquisitive are seeking wealth; and the ambitious are seeking position—and the great hungering, toiling multitudes are burdened and oppressed, let the church be on its guard lest some new spiritual visitation, some new provi-

dential movement for social justice, reach its culmination, and break forth suddenly, and find you in this twentieth century unprepared, just as a similar spiritual visitation came suddenly after a long period of providential preparation and found the church of the sixteenth century unprepared.

CHAPTER VI.

THE IMPORTUNATE WIDOW AND THE REWARDS OF THE FAITHFUL.

"WHILE the Bridegroom tarried!" This brief statement from the parable of the Ten Virgins is full of pathetic suggestions. It signifies that the great spiritual visitation which comes so suddenly and startlingly to men is preceded by a long period of waiting and suspense and prayer in the devout and more spiritual portion of the church. During this period such people dwell often with fond memories on the traditions of the past. They are like the faithful exiles in Babylon in this respect; and they are tempted to wonder whether another divine intervention on behalf of humanity and of human rights will ever be seen again on earth. This period of waiting and solicitude and prayer, this period in which the Divine Being appears to be indifferent to human affairs, and deaf to His people's prayers, is illustrated by the parable of the Importunate Widow and the Unrighteous Judge. (See Luke xviii:1-8 R.V.):

"And He spake a parable to them to this end, that men ought always to pray and not to faint [or become discouraged].

"2 Saying there was in a city a judge who feared not God neither regarded man.

"3 And there was a widow in that city, and she came to him [or kept on coming to him] saying avenge me of mine adversary [or execute justice for me against mine adversary].

"4 And he would not for a while, but afterward he said within himself, though I fear not God nor regard man,

"5 Yet because this widow troubleth me I will avenge her [or secure justice for her] lest by her continual coming [and repeated entreaty] she weary me.

"6 And the Lord said hear what the unrighteous Judge saith. [R.V.]

"7 And shall not God avenge his own elect [or shall not God execute justice on behalf of His chosen ones] who cry day and night unto

Him, though He bear long with them? [Or as the Revised Version renders this verse "Shall not God avenge His own elect and He is long suffering over them?"]

"8 I tell you that He will avenge them speedily [or execute justice for them suddenly]. Nevertheless when the Son of Man cometh shall He find faith on the earth?"

This is the parable; and now we turn again to history for illustration. About the year 1725 A.D. John Wesley had a notable religious awakening. He began to see that he must do more than live an outwardly moral life, and that he must have more than outward conformity to certain religious rules. He began to see that without inward holiness he could never see the Lord (Hebrews xii:14). Accordingly he began, by prayer, by the study of the Scriptures and by the careful reading of other devotional books to seek for holiness of heart and life. Later on, at the college in Oxford, he was joined by his brother Charles, George Whitefield and a number of others. They lived a devout, methodical life, and held regular meetings for prayer and the study of the Word of God. They saw the immorality and irreligion that prevailed around them, and were impressed with the common people's needs. It was the darkest hour of the time, and earnest men were again saying "What is the world coming to? The church has lost its salutary influence, the educated classes are becoming sceptical, and the moral and social problems are appalling to a thoughtful mind." In October, 1735, John and Charles Wesley embarked for Georgia, intending to become missionaries to the Indians and to the colonists in that part; but their work was for the most part a failure, and in February, 1738, they were back in England again; and soon after John Wesley was writing in his diary the severest and most depreciatory things against himself. He was

stating that his best conduct was defective; his best service without merit, and that he could hope for divine acceptance and favor only through the infinite mercy of God and the atoning merit of Christ. He writes the following lines: "I went to America to convert the Indians but O! who shall convert me? Who, what is he that will deliver me from this evil heart of unbelief?" Thirteen years of prayerful, earnest living had passed and this is as far as he has reached! What a commentary all this is on our Lord's words "Nevertheless when the Son of Man cometh shall He find faith on the earth?" In other words, when the Divine visitation comes at length the chosen few will have almost given up hope. But in the month of May following he entered into the rest of soul that comes through personal faith in Christ; his brother Charles and his friend George Whitefield having preceded him in this. In the latter part of this year the churches were closed against them by order of the bishops. And this brings us up to Dec. 31st, 1738. In the evening of that day John and Charles Wesley, George Whitefield and others,—about sixty altogether, half the number that waited in the upper room before the day of Pentecost—were assembled at a watch-night meeting in Fetter Lane, in London, and gave themselves up to prayer and supplication for the closing hours of the year. At length the clock struck twelve, and the year 1739 A.D. was ushered in. It was surely time to close the meeting and go to their respective places of abode; but they had no desire to leave. An indefinable, mystical influence was upon them and seemed to hold them to the place. The Unseen Presence was above them waiting to give a wonderful manifestation, but they did not understand. The forces of the coming spiritual kingdom were working in a subtle manner upon their hearts, the place was hallowed, and they continued, with ex-

pectant faces, before the throne. The moments glide away as they pray and wait and worship, and at length the clock strikes one; but it never occurs to them that they are trespassing on nature's law; that the body has need of sleep and rest; and that night is the time for repose. They are rapt in the higher exercises of the mind and spirit, and whether they are in the body or out of the body they hardly know. Another hour glides away and the clock strikes two, and still they pray and watch and worship before the throne. They were in a struggle like that of wrestling Jacob; and out of their intercessions and triumphant pleadings the coming spiritual kingdom was to be born, and if a voice out of the higher sphere had been heard saying "let me go for the day breaketh," they would have replied, in the spirit of Charles Wesley's later hymn,

"Wrestling we will not let Thee go,
Till we Thy name, Thy nature know."

And thus they continued in their supplications till about three o'clock that morning, when suddenly the place became *to them* awful and glorious with the Divine Presence. It seemed as if the veil that separates the present sphere from the other sphere was lifted, and those sixty disciples caught a glimpse of the ineffable glory, and the vision was overpowering. They felt as Moses must have felt before the burning bush and the awe-inspiring voice; as Joshua must have felt before the mysterious warrior, the unseen Captain of Jehovah's advancing hosts. (See Exodus iii:2-5 and Joshua v:13-14.) Some of them fell on their faces in lowly adoration; others burst forth into rapturous, irrepressible expressions of joy and praise. All felt that they were at the very gate of Heaven, that they had received a new revelation of the Divine Being, and that He was about to do

great things upon the earth. This was the divine anointing with which the great evangelical revival of the eighteenth century was ushered in. In its essential characteristics it was very much like the uplifting that came upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost seventeen hundred years before; and from that meeting those sixty men went forth and proclaimed everywhere this message, "that men are saved through faith upon repentance, and that the worst sinner that walks the earth may become a child of God,"

"May know and feel his sins forgiven,
Blest with this antepast of heaven."

Religion had degenerated into formalism and ceremonialism in that age, and this message of the Wesleys and of Whitefield startled and electrified the people of England. It brought a new awakening to life, and wonder. In this message they were really hearing the midnight cry again, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh"! "The spiritual kingdom is coming in the new times"! They saw again the outburst of light that lit up the whole heavens, relieved the darkness of earth, and brought reality into view; and again the words were fulfilled "As the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west so also shall the coming of the Son of Man be" (Matt. xxiv:27). In fact, in the Methodist movement these words were most literally fulfilled. It commenced in England, in the Eastern Hemisphere, and it shone into the Western Hemisphere. It had its most beneficent and uplifting influence among the settlers in the United States and Canada, and saved them from growing up unregenerated and wild. "The religious power of speech was shown when a dread of enthusiasm closed against the new apostles the pulpits of the Established Church." "They shall put you out of the synagogues," was

our Lord's warning to the apostles of His own day, and this official rejection of Wesley and his associates was a fulfillment of the same words in modern days. But the new apostles were not baffled. As John R. Green, himself a clergyman of the Church of England, says in "his Short History of the English People," the voice of these new apostles "was soon heard in the wildest and most barbarous corners of the land, among the bleak moors of Northumberland, or in the dens of London, or in the long galleries where the Cornish miner hears in the pauses of his labor the sobbing of the sea." Their preaching, as Mr. Green says of Whitefield's efforts, was at times extravagant and commonplace, but it hushed "all criticism by its intense reality, its earnestness of belief, its deep, tremulous sympathy with the sin and sorrow of mankind." "But the Methodists were the least result of the Methodist revival. Its action upon the church broke the lethargy of the clergy, and the evangelical movement found representatives like Newton and Cecil within the Establishment. In the nation at large appeared a new moral enthusiasm which, rigid and pedantic as it often seemed, was still healthy in its social tone; and whose power was seen in the disappearance of the profligacy which had disgraced the upper classes, and the foulness which had infested literature ever since the Restoration. But the noblest result of the religious revival was the steady attempt, which has never ceased from that day to this, to remedy the guilt, the ignorance, the physical suffering, the social degradation of the profligate and the poor." The foregoing sentences, selected from the well-known and unprejudiced historian, sum up the main results of the great spiritual visitation that came to the church, and to society in general, more than one hundred and seventy years ago. The time was ripe, of course, but the movement

was inaugurated and ushered in by the watch-night meeting in Fetter Lane on that memorable night of Dec. 31st, 1738. And this, by the way, is an illustration of another parable which culminates in the words "When the fruit is ripe [Revised Version] *immediately* he putteth in the sickle because the harvest is come" (see Mark iv:26-29). "Immediately"! which again suggests the suddenness of the coming of the Son of Man.

But the main point of the parable of the Importunate Widow is that at length, after great testings of faith, "God will" avenge His own elect, "He will execute justice for His chosen, prayerful people speedily"—there you have the idea of suddenness again. John Wesley and these sixty associates of his, with no rank in church or state except the lowest, are suddenly and providentially promoted to the foremost places in the spiritual kingdom in England. Formerly they were crying in prayer and supplication day and night, like orphans (see John xiv:18 in the margin) bereaved, neglected, desolate, because "the Presence" of their Lord seemed to be withdrawn from the earth; but now, according to His Promise He has come again, and given them fullness of joy in the assurance of answered prayer. The one hundred and twenty disciples of Jesus, who waited in supplication before the day of Pentecost, displaced the chief priests and rabbis and elders of that day. Just so John Wesley and his prayerful associates displaced the bishops and archdeacons and canons of their day, or were promoted to a really higher rank. In each case the ranks and standards of earth were reversed by the higher laws which rule in Heaven. In each case the rule of Heaven, or of the Kingdom of Heaven, had suddenly appeared among men. For the Galilean fishermen and their friends, and these despised Oxford students and their friends, had both

received the same great spiritual endowment; they had both received it suddenly, and had both received "speedy" promotion over the religious officials and dignitaries of the day. For as Thomas Carlyle would say, both of these classes of dignitaries wore "the trappings and the regalia of the offices of religion," and represented "the show of things" in the religious realm; but the Galilean fishermen and the sixty associates of Wesley were the representatives, not of official religion, but of the real Christianity of Christ. Thus the Son of Man came "suddenly" and executed justice "speedily" in each case.

But John Wesley's promotion, in particular, illustrates another parable about Christ's coming again, or about a divine intervening in human affairs, disturbing man-made appointments and man-made arrangements. See Luke xiv:7-10, "And He put forth a parable to those which were bidden when He marked how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them, when thou art bidden of any man to a marriage feast, sit not down in the highest room lest a more honorable man than thou be bidden of him; and he that had thee and him come and say to thee, give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room, that when he that bade thee cometh he may say to thee, Friend, come up higher: then shalt thou have honor [or glory] in the presence of those that sit at meat with thee. For everyone that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." This parable, of course, does not in every case have its complete or perfect fulfilment in the present sphere. Its perfect fulfilment will not be seen until the proper assignments and rewards, to human merit or demerit, are pronounced in a higher sphere; but we do see fulfilments in the

present life. We see them in individual experience and in Christian history. The parable sets forth the case of the man who does faithful, self-renouncing, self-sacrificing work in the humblest, hardest, least attractive, least remunerative positions, who refuses to indulge in the little compromises with the world spirit which those who desire to have the Divine Spirit must avoid; who never resorts to the little secret manipulations, and the not very scrupulous methods, that succeed in getting some men of showy exterior and mediocre talent to the front; who stands aloof from such methods and such work as Robert Browning suggests in his admirable lines:

"Not on the vulgar mass
Called work, must sentence pass;
Things done that took the eye and had the price,
O'er which from level stand
The low world laid its hand,
Found straightway to its mind, could value in a trice."

But this man with the faithful spirit and undeveloped powers—never satisfied with his own attainments, measuring things by higher standards, always ready to censure his own work, deeply in love with moral beauty, prefers purity of motive to earthly treasure, prizes inward rectitude more than social, political, or ecclesiastical rank—keeps his eye above, trusts that God is faithful and that Christ's promises are true. Oh, he is a rare man! But if his faith only hold out, if he can only persevere and wait long enough, he is bound to make a great discovery at length. He will discover that the assurances of Christ are true indeed; that there is reality in the spiritual realm; and that there are eternal laws back of the illusions and false appearances of earth. He is a rare man, we repeat, that is willing to wait so long, and to subject himself to such restraints as these;

but Christ Himself said, "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life and *few* there are that find it"; or *few* there are that make the great discovery; which means that Christ Himself said that such a man is rare. This man labors on in his humble sphere and grows—the world may keep him down for a time but it cannot stop him from growing—until at length the spiritual manifestation and the providential promotion come together* according to the higher law of the spiritual life stated in John xiv:23, "If a man love me he will keep my words, and my Father will love him and we will come unto him and make our abode with him"; and according to the promise in Luke xii:32-37, He will come and serve him. The man has grown until he is too large for his restricted sphere and now he enters his proper place and work, and is honored by all who are enjoying the gospel banquet, or as the parable puts it, "by all who sit at meat with thee." John Wesley fulfilled the foregoing conditions, went down into the lowest depths of self-abasement and self-renunciation, labored in the humblest positions, served the most neglected people before he was called up higher, to be the great evangelist, and leader of the spiritual forces of the age.

And in these Divine visitations, or comings of the Lord, still another scripture is illustrated or fulfilled, namely, that recorded in Matt. xxiv:45-48 and Luke xii:41-44, "Who then is that faithful and wise steward whom his lord shall make ruler over his household to give them their portion of meat in due season"? Which means, who is the man who has been obedient and diligent in the service of his Master Jesus Christ, even when the Master's presence seemed to have been withdrawn? Who is the man who has

* In Browning's poem "Instans Tyrannus" the studious reader will find another illustration of the subject of this passage.

been considerate and gracious toward his fellow servants when he might have acted the tyrant or the time-server's part? Who is the man who, beside having the foregoing merits, is also "a wise steward"? The man who, as Lord Rosebery says of Oliver Cromwell, is a combination of the religious mystic and the practical man, and is, therefore, the sincerest and strongest kind of a man? The man who is not so prepossessed with his vision of things that are ideal and remote that he cannot see the true and necessary relations of things that are near at hand? Who and where is this coming man? As much as to say again, "He is a rare man." "Of a truth I say unto you that he will make him ruler over all that he hath" or "set him over all his goods"; which means that he will make that man master of the whole realm of truth relating to the moral and spiritual life, and will give him clear views of the movements of God's providence in his day. And therefore we note at this point, that our Lord did not teach that revelation and prophecy would cease when the last of the twelve apostles had passed away; but He did teach that the Revealing Spirit will be with His disciples forever; and He does imply that God's providence will raise up a leader and teacher for each great crisis of Christian history; and that the same Revealing Spirit will guide this leader "into all of the truth," or into the full content of the gospel message; fulfill Christ's promise: "He shall take of mine and declare it unto you" (John xvi:13-15), and give him such a view of God and His truth as will make him a competent spiritual guide to the people of his age. *And this assurance from our Lord settles the question of the true seat of authority in religion.* It is not in ecclesiastical councils, nor in any prelate or dignitary elected by such ecclesiastical councils, but it is in such divinely annointed and divinely illuminated men as

Providence raises up and prepares. In the eighteenth century, John Wesley was the man. His sermons, pamphlets, tracts circulated everywhere among the people; and warned or comforted or edified them according to their need. In other words, he "gave them their portion of meat in due season": or, in due season he fed them with his truth. He gave the unprivileged, hungering multitudes the essential elementary teachings of the gospel. Out of the deep things of his own heart's experience he elucidated scripture doctrine for the open-minded and inquiring, and gave comforting assurances to the burdened and the weary. He did for God's people of his generation what Martin Luther had done for his.

"Who then is that faithful and wise servant or steward?" We believe that in the seventeenth century, John Bunyan, the great Puritan writer, was the man. His "Pilgrim's Progress" was given to him. "It was a revelation and a benediction to himself; and when published, it became a revelation and a benediction to the English people and to the human race, for it was translated into many languages and read in many lands. The Divine Spirit co-operated with the natural powers of genius in that great man to give him insight somewhat like Shakespeare's into the great depths of the human heart, into the secret and subterranean workings of its depravity, and into its amazing possibilities of courage and of faith; and if it should be objected that he had little or nothing to say about the social message of Jesus, and that this Pilgrim goes through his whole career with no other thought but that of getting safely out of this world into a better, we reply that individualism was the characteristic of that age, and Bunyan, like the great Teacher, "taught the people as they were able to hear it" (Mark iv:33-34). He gave to his generation the highest

conceptions of Christianity that they were able to receive. Social and economic conditions were very different then, and social and economic problems were not clamoring for solution as they are to-day.*

"Who then is that faithful and wise steward" whom the Lord will place over His people to teach them and lead them in their day? Who will set His truth before them as the occasion may require? We venture the opinion that in the nineteenth century Henry Ward Beecher was the man. Brought up in a New England home, the sovereignty of God had been the centre of all the religious teachings of his early years. God's government was the great thing that overshadowed his life. God's government was over all he said and did, but the more gracious and loveable aspects of His nature were hidden from his view. Beecher passed through a great spiritual struggle on account of this, and this struggle culminated in a revelation to him of God's fatherhood and love. We give the result of it in his own words in order that the reader may be the better able to appreciate the man:

"I remember the time when it first dawned on my thought. I should not forget, if I lived a thousand years, the wonder of that transcendent hour. The smallest key, being put into a music-box, rightly made, and rightly turned, may cause that box to go on for an hour, rolling out exquisite tunes. What the box performs is in no proportion to the size of the key. And the size of the truth that winds up a man's experiences and feelings is in no proportion to the

* William Wilberforce, the great evangelical churchman, may be mentioned as another man who wrote a work that was really an inspired book. It was a message from God especially to the educated classes of England of one hundred years ago. Many editions of it were published, and it was translated into several languages, and accomplished an immense amount of good. This book was commonly called "A Practical View of Christianity."

breadth of those feelings and experiences. That truth may be simple almost to inanity; and yet, as a key in the hand of God applied to the music-box of the soul, it may unfold and develop that which shall fill a whole life. I recognize to this moment that my ministry and character have been shaped by the view that dawned upon me in one single moment; and though these views are often hid as stars by night, they are never wiped out, any more than the stars are wiped out. Though my faith in the Sun of righteousness is sometimes clouded, it is no more affected by the clouds that cover it, than the sun is by mists and vapours when they fill the air. *That view which came to me so suddenly was the fact that I was a child of the Father of the universe, and that God's administration to me was not an administration of imperative law alone, nor of civil law alone, but the administration of a voluntary Father's heart that had a right to show mercy where he would, and do with his affections whatever he chose.*"*

And so we make the statement that in modern times there have been men who have been as truly and as fully inspired as any of those of ancient times. We are aware that such a statement is out of harmony with our former modes of thinking. We anticipate that some objector will make an indignant protest. But the question is, Is not this statement true? Does it not accord with the facts? Does it not agree with the Scriptures? We think that it most evidently agrees with both, and we put the question and the answer before the reader once more, "Who then is the faithful and wise steward whom the Lord will set over his household to give them their portion of meat in due season," or at the proper time? "Verily I say to you, he will make him ruler over

* In the Appendix to this book the reader will find estimates, or appreciative statements, in regard to the endowments, the character, the teaching, and the work of Henry Ward Beecher, from Rev. Dr. J. O. Peck, an eminent and very successful pastor evangelist of the Methodist Episcopal Church of America; from Rev. Dr. George Douglas, an eminent and deeply spiritual minister of the Canadian Methodist Church, and from the celebrated Rev. Dr. Joseph Parker, of the Congregational denomination in England. (See NOTE B.)

all that he hath." And we ask, Is not our explanation the simple and reasonable one? And how can we explain this question and this answer on the old view that Christ's coming never means anything else than a personal, bodily manifestation at the end of human history on earth? Let the reader search the commentaries that hold this view, and let him see for himself how meagre or unsatisfactory are their explanations of this verse; let him note how they fail to meet the question asked, or the answer which Christ gave. Christ said "that among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist; notwithstanding he that is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he" (see Matt. xi:11-12): which means that he "who is but little" in Christ's Spiritual Kingdom on earth has greater spiritual privileges, and may have greater spiritual illuminations, than the greatest of the Old Testament prophets ever had, because he lives in a greater dispensation, and has the advantage of the teachings of Christ. And if this is so, why cannot Providence raise up inspired leaders in modern times just as He did in ancient times? Why can He not make them as competent to meet the needs of modern times, as the Old Testament prophets and New Testament apostles were to meet the needs of ancient times? Why can He not give them as complete an enduement and illumination when the need is just as great—or perhaps greater because the conditions are more complex. Why should not the teachings of Beecher meet the peculiar conditions and needs of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries more fully than the writings of Paul can meet them? Paul's mind was largely engrossed in missionary work and in controversies with the Jews and with Jewish Christians. The subject of these controversies was circumcision and other Jewish traditions, and the question was whether these were

binding on disciples in the Gentile churches; but all of this is ancient history now. Paul could not project his mind into the peculiar conditions of a period nineteen hundred years later—and if he could have done so he would not have had the time. The problems of any one age are enough for any one man.

But no doubt the same objector will protest again. He will say that "we are bringing the Holy Scriptures down to the level of a merely human book." But we reply that we are not bringing anything down. We are not levelling down at all, we are levelling up; and, we repeat, we are doing so in perfect harmony with what the Scriptures themselves teach. There is no Scripture warrant for the old view, that a certain number of prophets or inspired teachers followed one another through a period of more than sixteen hundred years, and then prophecy and inspiration abruptly ceased with the death of the Apostle John. On the contrary, inspiration has appeared again and again in modern times, and in as large a measure as in ancient times. Why should this be doubted when the abiding promise is so emphatically given, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me out of his inmost being shall flow rivers of living water. And this he spake of the Spirit which they that believe in Him should receive" (John vii:39-40). We do not underrate the inspired men of old. It is not that we appreciate Paul or Isaiah or Jeremiah less, but that we appreciate Beecher and Wesley and Bunyan more.

Of course it is ever to be remembered that the Holy Scriptures have the supreme place in the hearts of Christian people throughout the world. It is agreed that they are the final authority on questions of doctrine and religious faith. However much we differ in methods of interpretation, we unite in accepting whatever we believe can be legitimately

proved from them. We believe that we have in them all of the great truths of spiritual religion. We have these truths in especially luminous clearness, and in perfect proportions, in the teachings of Christ. And while, in the writings of Prophets and Apostles, there was much that was local and temporary, much that related to the peculiar conditions and to the controversies of their own day, there was much beside that was of universal and abiding interest. Isaiah's "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God," and Paul's thirteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians will never grow old. Nevertheless we need modern revelations to enable us to see the meanings and the present day applications of many of these very Scripture truths. For instance we have in the Epistle to the Romans (viii:1-14), the beautiful teaching of Paul on the new life in Christ; but men in the natural state cannot enter into its meaning (see 1 Cor. ii:14-15) without a radical conversion; and a radical conversion brings to the convert a revelation that is entirely new to him, even if it came to Paul nearly nineteen hundred years ago. It awakens him to a new world, just as if no one else had ever beheld the like before. And similarly, men with a mission to lead and teach, men like John Bunyan, George Fox, John Wesley, William Wilberforce, Frederick W. Robertson and Henry Ward Beecher, through much prayer and great testings of faith, have received spiritual insight into other truths which were new to them; and which in turn, when proclaimed, became revelations to the new period that was being ushered in. But the Holy Scriptures were the fountainhead from which these truths were derived.

There is still another passage to be explained while we are considering the rewards given in these spiritual visitations to faithful men. We refer to the parable in Matt. xxv:14-23, "For the Kingdom of Heaven is as a man

travelling into a far country, who called his own servants and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one He gave five talents, and to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability and straightway took his journey," etc. This parable illustrates the following general truths. The cause of Christianity in the world has not advanced at a steady, even, uniform rate. We noticed this in explaining the parable of the Ten Virgins. Christian progress has been marked by periods of upheaval and revival, followed by periods of moral and spiritual decline. There comes a great wave of moral and religious enthusiasm which lifts civilization up to better moral and social and political conditions; to higher moral standards; to loftier ideals; to inspiring visions and to boundless hopes. But it seems too much for human nature to continue at this high level very long. It has got somewhat beyond its normal self. And the maintenance of such conditions requires perpetual vigilance, unceasing self-denial and prayer, continual subordination of the lower life, continual obedience to the laws of the spiritual life, strict observance of the requirements of the higher moral standards that have been reached. After a while the vigilance relaxes; the strictness is considered too puritanical and severe; the spirit of self-indulgence begins to be allowed; little compromises with the worldly spirit creep in; better material conditions and improved social position beget pride or self-satisfaction in those who once were lowly in mind and in estate; materialistic ideas take the place of spiritual views; zeal for the sect or for the religious connection takes the place of zeal for the Kingdom of Christ; and almost imperceptibly the great wave of spiritual life begins to recede; and the inevitable consequences soon appear; Christian testimony becomes less frequent; the note of assurance becomes more faint; spirit-

ual power in religious communions begins to wane; the hold of the church on the masses lessens; and things begin to look as if the Lord has "gone away into a far country," and is not likely ever to return. It looks as if He has put the church upon its trial, left it to do as it likes, and left humanity to take care of itself; and the strong crush the weak, and the rich oppress the poor, and hypocrisy and temporizing prevail more and more in the religious sphere, and because iniquity abounds the love of many grows cold (Matt. xxiv:12), and organized religion no longer represents the Christianity of Christ, and "because there is no vision the people perish," and scepticism in regard to religion becomes common, and superficial people are assuming that there is no such a thing as a divine administration of justice upon this earth, and a few devout, faithful, prayerful souls, who see the real condition of things, are continually crying like the saints of old, "How long O Lord! How long"! when wilt Thou come for our deliverance or relief? "Will the Lord cast off forever? And will he be favorable no more? Is His mercy clean gone forever and doth His promise fail forever more"? (Psalm lxxvii:7-8.)

We have noted the great religious uplifting which the people of Europe received in the thirteenth century through the influence of the lives and the preaching of St. Francis and his self-renouncing monks. After this things went back to the conditions which led John Wycliffe of England to denounce the errors and corruptions of the mendicant friars. In many respects the great Puritan period was a glorious period of English history; but after it came a period of moral laxity and decay. We have seen the improved conditions that followed the great Methodist revival; but after Wesley's death Methodism in America be-

came mixed up more or less with the Negro slavery system. Some Methodists made excuses for the evil, and some of them owned slaves or otherwise profited by the system, and thus shared in the iniquity and the shame. And still they were Methodists. Yet Wesley had stated that "slavery was the sum of all villainies"; had pronounced against it in the rules of the societies that were under him; and one of the last acts of his life was to write a letter to William Wilberforce encouraging him to continue in his fight against it, and comparing him to "Athanasius against the world." But Peter Cartwright, one of the most noted of the Pioneer Preachers, tells how he left Kentucky about the year 1825 on account of slavery, and went to the state of Illinois only to find that the system had many friends there; and he noted the indifference of many Methodists in both states. And Professor Goldwin Smith relates that years after this "a Methodist general conference at Cincinnati repelled with contempt a mild reprobation of slavery transmitted to it by the Wesleyan Methodists of England, and thirty Methodist ministers went to compliment Daniel Webster on the speech that numbered him with the apostates" from the anti-slavery cause.* Even when anti-slavery sentiment was growing among the Methodist conferences reactionary bishops tried to keep it down. To the Negro race it might indeed seem

* See Professor Goldwin Smith's book entitled "The Moral Crusader, William Lloyd Garrison."

The reader may obtain fuller information on the question of American Methodism and Negro Slavery in the "Life of Bishop Matthew Simpson," by George R. Crooks, D.D., in chapter ii on the General Conference of 1844, and the debate regarding the possible division of the church and nation. Note in that chapter a reference to the claim of "the inherent right of slavery to go anywhere within the limits of the nation in the person of a slave-holding bishop."

as if the Lord "had gone away into a far country": it might seem doubtful if He ever would return.

But during the period of reaction from Puritan strictness in England, the Lord had left five talents with one young man named John Wesley and five with his brother Charles; and five with another young man named George Whitefield; and he had left two talents with certain other young men, and one talent with a number of others. Of this latter class we have a specimen in the man who hid his talent, in other words, neglected to exercise his gifts, because the conditions were too severe. And the Wesleys and Whitefield and the other faithful ones, as soon as they were called, proceeded to work and diligently used their natural and spiritual endowments. We have shown this when telling about the earlier parts of their religious life, and when explaining the parable of the man who took the lowest seat. After a long time—how long we have already seen—the new Divine visitation, or day of reckoning, came; and Wesley and his friends were ready with talents doubled, to give a good account. And the Lord said, "Well done good and faithful servants you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you rulers over many things." And now their powers of judgment are released from the influence of human tradition; they rise above the mists of a mere earthly life, for now "they know the truth" for themselves and the truth has "made them free"; and heavenly influences are playing, like sunbeams in the morning, upon their powers of emotion, sympathy, intuition and expression; their sphere is marvellously enlarged, their influence and their work are multiplied manifold; and John Wesley, who used to think that his father's Epworth parish would be all that he could care for, was now given England, Wales and Ireland for a parish, and as his influence still further broadened, he

began to feel that his parish was the world; in other words, he had been faithful over comparatively few things, and his Lord made him ruler over many things.

And in the days preceding the agitation against the system of Negro slavery in America, the Lord left five talents with one young man named Wendell Phillips, whose great oration delivered later on in Faneuil Hall, Boston, on Dec. 8th, 1837, might be called the trumpet blast, the cry at the midnight hour, signifying that Negro slavery was doomed, and a new moral and religious awakening was drawing near. And He left five talents with another young man named Matthew Simpson, who became the consummate orator, the great and saintly Methodist Episcopal bishop, the outspoken friend and advocate, both in the church and out of the church, of the Abolition cause. And He left five talents with still another young man named Henry Ward Beecher, who became the great prophet and inspiral teacher, as we have seen, not only for the American nation but for the universal church. And He left five talents more (talents of executive ability, a genius for managing affairs) with another young man named Abraham Lincoln, who at length became the great statesman of the Anti-Slavery movement, and issued the proclamation of emancipation for the Negro race, and saved the American Union as well. And he left two talents with another class of young men of whom we may mention William Lloyd Garrison as a foremost and heroic example; and the talents of all of these young men were developed through faithful use, till at length their sphere of influence was marvellously enlarged; and another eminent statesman could say of Lincoln, for example, who had commenced life in the humblest conditions, that "unknown to fame when he was elected to the presidency, he exhibited a power for the government of men which has

scarcely been surpassed in any age. He saved the American Union, enfranchised the Black race, and for the task he had to perform he was endowed, in some respects, almost miraculously. No man ever displayed a greater insight into the motives, the complex motives, which shape the public opinion of a free country; and he possessed, almost to the degree of an instinct, the supreme quality of a statesman, of taking the right decision, taking it at the right moment, and expressing it in language of incomparable felicity.”* This, we consider, is one of the finest illustrations of our Lord’s words “Thou hast been faithful over a few things. I will make thee ruler over many thing.” And thus these men received their due rewards. They were faithful first in the humbler sphere. They fulfilled the tests of obedience when the Lord to all appearance was not directly interposing on behalf of right, when men in general were assuming that He was away in a far country, and was not likely to return. In the humble, trying sphere their talents gradually increased, and at length, when the crisis came, they multiplied miraculously, and found a correspondingly larger sphere. And thus these men “entered into the joy of their Lord” many years before they entered into their heavenly abode. They felt the same kind of inward exultation, the same sense of power, the same assurance of ultimate triumph which He had even in the midst of the sorrows of this earthly life. “These things have I spoken unto you that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full” (John xv:11).

* Extract from speech by Sir Wilfrid Laurier in Canadian Parliament on the death of Gladstone. Delivered May 26th, 1898.

CHAPTER VII.

PARABLES OF DIVISION: THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS.

THERE is another most conspicuous feature of these comings of the Lord, these great spiritual visitations of history. They produce divisions in human society; they arouse and intensify human passions and prejudices that hitherto were latent; they stir up bitter and hateful feelings that hitherto were unrevealed; they break up the great depths of human nature; they draw forth the very best and the very worst that is in men. They reveal their inward loyalty to the highest and best, or their contemptible slavery to the inferior and the base. They make separations in family circles, in religious bodies, in society in general. Sometimes they are the means of ranging different nations, or different factions in the same nation, on opposite sides, and in horrible battle array. Of the latter we have an example in the great American Civil War, ostensibly over the question of the right of any state, or states, to secede from the Federal Union whenever they might choose, for any reason which they might consider sufficient or expedient; but really over the question whether the Negro race should be free in that land of which freedom was the watchword and the boast. In Luke xii:49-53 Christ says "I am come to send fire on the earth and what will I if it be already kindled? . . . Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you nay, but rather division. For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son and the son against the father. The mother against the daughter and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against the daughter in law and the daughter in law

against the mother in law." And in Matt. x:34-36 He says "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth. I came not to send peace but a sword. . . . And a man's foes shall be they of his own household." And again, He says to those who were to be leaders in His Spiritual Kingdom, "Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall re-proach you, and cast out your name as evil for the Son of Man's sake" (Luke vi:22).

But we leave these literal statements and turn to the passage in Matt. xxv:31-46:

"31 When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the Holy angels with Him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

"32 And before Him shall be gathered all nations; and He shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

"33 And He shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

"34 Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

"35 For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

"36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

"37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

"38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

"39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

"40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

"41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

"42 For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

"43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

"44 Then shall they also answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

"45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

"46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."

Through all the centuries this parable has commonly been supposed to refer exclusively to the final consummation of human affairs. It has been regarded as a description of the spectacular scenes of an ultimate Judgment Day; but we shall endeavor to show that it has been fulfilled again and again in the great spiritual visitations of history; and we shall again draw freely upon history for illustrations and proofs. "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory and all the holy angels with Him," or, as it should be rendered, when the Son of Man shall come in His glory and all the holy, or devoted, messengers with Him, "then shall he sit upon the throne of His glory." The messengers referred to are the preachers of religious revival, or moral and social reformation, who are ready and waiting when the new movement has reached its crisis. We mean the crisis that occurs when the midnight cry is heard; or speaking literally, when the proclamation is delivered whose effects our Lord compares to the sudden, wide-flashing illumination of the lightning in the sky; the proclamation by a Martin Luther, or a John Wesley, or a Wendell Philipps, to the new times; the proclamation whose meaning is that the day of salvation or the day of liberty is drawing near;

or to use the language of the gospel, "the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." In the first century these messengers were the preachers of Christianity in the old Roman Empire, as we have seen in an earlier part of this book. In the thirteenth century they were the earnest, self-renouncing Franciscan monks, before the order had degenerated through wrangling and the worldly spirit. In the sixteenth century they were the preachers of the great Reformation who labored with such men as Luther and Melancthon and Calvin and Knox. In the eighteenth century, as we also saw in a previous chapter, they were the Methodist preachers who travelled over England, Ireland, Wales and America; and the missionaries who went with the message of the gospel to foreign lands.

"And before Him shall be gathered all nations" (Matt. xxv :32). This, also, was fulfilled in the old Roman Empire in the first century in that wonderful outbreak of Christianity as a spiritual force to which we have already referred. Luke says that at the time of the birth of Christ "There went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed," or that "all the world should be enrolled." (See Luke ii :1 R.V.) This means that all the people in the old Roman Empire were to be enrolled, for in that day the old Roman Empire was practically all of the world; it was all of the world that was known to the civilized portion of mankind. That world was brought to judgment by the witnesses or messengers of Christ.

And in the thirteenth century the messengers, the Franciscan monks, went in the self-sacrificing spirit of Jesus into all the world; into Italy, Spain, France, England, Germany, Austria, Hungary, and also into North Africa and Western Asia as far as the Mohammedan power would permit. They went with their message of repentance and salvation to all

of the nations that were accessible at the time. And we have seen that Martin Luther's proclamation summoned the nations of Europe to the bar; which means that he called the civilized nations of the world to Christ's judgment seat. And in the eighteenth century John Wesley declared "the world is my parish," which was really true, so extensively had his influence gone forth; thus we see that in every case these divine visitations have the characteristics of an all-pervading, awakening, universal movement; which is a more expanded way of saying that "before them shall be gathered all the nations of the world"—the gospel statement being a more vivid, concrete, impressive way of putting the same truth.

Verse "32 . . . And He shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats." In the old Roman Empire in the early centuries mankind separated into two great classes, one class against the Christians and the other in sympathy with them; and after Martin Luther's Proclamation was issued, all Europe was soon divided into two great factions, one of which was for him and the other against him. One stood for "the right of private judgment," for the right of each individual to come into the presence of his Maker, for personal dealings in regard to salvation, and spiritual guidance, without the intervention of Church authority or human priest; and the other stood for the absolute authority of the Church of Rome, and the subordination of all private judgment in matters of religion to the deliverances of the one supreme ecclesiastical head. And the wars in Europe for the next one hundred years were chiefly religious wars, arising directly, or indirectly, out of Luther's and his fellow reformer's work. And after the great awakening of the eighteenth century began, all England was soon divided into

two great parties; one for Wesley and the other against him, the one despising, slandering, or reviling him, and the other sympathizing with him, and helping him, and pointing to the good that he was doing; the one standing for spiritual and evangelical religion, and the other standing for a formal and ceremonial religion, or for a life of selfish indifference to religion altogether. And thus it is through His chosen representatives on earth, that Christ sits upon the throne in His Spiritual Kingdom and divides humanity at His call, or separates them as the shepherd divides the sheep from the goats; and in this way He fulfils His word in Rev. iii:21, "To Him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in His throne." And in this way He fulfilled His word to His apostles, "Verily, I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit upon the throne of His glory ye also shall sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. xix:28). The apostles' words separated the Jewish people in their day, just as Luther's and Wesley's did in a later age. The message that ushers in the Spiritual Kingdom is a proclamation that reaches all, and, at the same time, is a searching influence that divides. And the men who are raised up, and providentially prepared to send forth these proclamations, divide society, and are figuratively spoken of as sitting with Christ, or sitting as Christ sits, upon a judgment throne.

"Then shall the king say to those on His right hand and to those on His left, "come ye blessed" or "depart ye cursed," according to their attitude and conduct toward "these my brethren," in other words, toward these consecrated, faithful "messengers"; toward these Franciscan monks who went forth preaching repentance and promoting

revival in mediaeval Europe; and toward these heralds of the Reformation who went forth from the "school of Christ" in Geneva, from the influence of John Calvin; and toward these Methodist preachers in the days when they were persecuted or despised; and allotments of blessedness or of doom are pronounced to men and women according as they have treated "these brethren" of Christ with kindness or neglect when they were suffering hunger or thirst or imprisonment or other distresses. And let the reader note, it is of the final outcome of these Divine visitations that it is said "then shall the King say 'come ye blessed' or 'depart ye cursed.' " On each of these particular generations, as men and women pass away one by one from the present sphere of testing and probation, the King will pronounce these words. For note again, it does not say that the Son of Man, as represented in some faithful messenger like St. Francis or John Wesley, shall pronounce them; but in this office and work of delivering the final decision, for weal or for woe, to those whose probation on earth is at an end, it is Christ Himself that appears upon the scene. It is the King Himself that assumes the position of final arbiter and judge. Then will the King say "come ye blessed," or "depart ye cursed" to those whom death has brought face to face with the record of the irreversible, irretrievable past.

Thus the closing part of this great drama of a human generation brings us up to the verge of another world. At the end the curtain is lifted and we get a glimpse of things that mortal eye hath never seen. Awful words issue from the vast unknown. "These shall go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." In imagination we see the throne of God, and, in the centre of adoring hosts, we see Him that lived and died on earth, and that lives and reigns forever in Heaven. We

see the fruitions of life; we see the raptures of the redeemed; we see the divisions of eternity; we see the approaching night of blackness and darkness forever; we see pale human faces that express something of the bitterness of remorse, and of the awfulness of blank despair. Then in a moment the curtain drops—a moment is long enough to impress such a scene upon our memory forever; and—just as after a vivid lightning flash in some terrible midnight hour of blackness and thunder and approaching storm—in the twinkling of an eye all is darkness and mystery again.*

In his book on "The New Evangel" Professor Drummond criticises the old view that this passage is a literal description of the scenes of the final Judgment Day. And, strange to say, he states that "it is materialism that science objects to in the old doctrine." And in this instance, "Science is making a further demand on religion for spirituality."† The "externalness" of the old view awakens his

* Professor Weymouth, whose translation of the New Testament into Modern English is considered one of the best, translates Matt. xxv:46 as follows: "And these shall depart into the punishment of the ages, but the righteous into the life of the ages." In this way he retains the indefiniteness of the original word *αἰωνιος* (aeonios, aeonian), which is translated "everlasting" and "eternal" in our Authorized Version—a needless variation in the same verse. It is a mistake to quote this verse as a proof of the endlessness of either the life of the righteous, or of the punishment of the lost. We must go to other Scriptures for proofs in either case.

† The following is a paragraph from Professor Drummond's book on "The New Evangel" and from the chapter on "The Survival of the Fittest":

"We have hinted that the scientific difficulty in accepting the doctrine in its conventional form is one of standpoint. But the particular point of the objection is worth defining, and for a remarkable reason. *What science really rebels at in the old doctrine is its 'externalness.'* It

suspicion that it is not correct. And we may add that this old view is absolutely disproved by our Lord's statements in Matt. xvi:27-28:

"27 For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father with His messengers, and then shall He render unto every man according to his works.

"28 Verily I say unto you, there are some standing here that shall not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom."

The latter part of verse 27 condenses into one brief sentence the meaning of the parable of the Sheep and the Goats. The rewards for faithful, self-sacrificing service, and the terrible retribution for neglect of service, are all summed up in the words, "Then shall He render unto every man according to his works." And verse 28 proves that He was not speaking of some event that was indefinitely far off. Mark's version of the same passage is, "For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him shall the Son of Man also be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of His father and His holy messengers. Verily I say unto you there are some here of them that stand by, who shall not taste of death till they see the Kingdom of God come with Power" (Mark

is outside nature, a foreign and unanticipated element, a breach of continuity. And what science would like to see is a universal principle—a principle, if possible, operating from within, bound up with nature itself, and involved in the general system of things. Now, such a claim coming from science is in every way astonishing and unexpected. For observe what it is. *It is simply a demand upon religion for a further spirituality.* It is really materialism that science objects to in the old doctrine—it objects to a material throne, and bar, and trumpet, to an external law, to a judgment from without rather than from within. The protest, in fact, is a rebuke to religion for the grossness of its conceptions, for its tardy abandonment of the letter, for the permanence it has given to provisional forms—in short, for its unspirituality."

viii:38 and ix:1). So that "the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom" (according to Matt. xvi:28) is the same thing as "the Kingdom of God coming with power" (according to Mark ix:1). And these verses may be expanded thus. There shall be a glorious manifestation of the Presence of the Son of Man, a glorious demonstration of a Divine Providence over the cause of righteousness and truth, a divine interposition in human affairs; and this interposition or providence shall bring rewards to the faithful; rewards of spiritual life and power on earth and rewards of rest and felicity in Heaven; and it shall bring shame and everlasting contempt to those who have been guilty of unfaithfulness and neglect; and this glorious manifestation or interposition, shall take place, and men shall see it, before the last of the people of this very generation shall have passed away.

And this same view of Christ coming in judgment in the latter part of the first century of Christian history is repeated somewhat more fully in Rev. xxii:10-12 "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy let him be holy still; and behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me [or as the margin says, my wages are with me] to render unto every man according as His work shall be." The words "the time is at hand" prove that the judgment referred to was like the ones which we illustrated in the Chapter on The Rewards of the Faithful, the chapter preceding this. But the words "He that is unjust let him be unjust still, and he that is righteous let him be righteous still," etc., are like the last words in the Chapter on The Sheep and the Goats. They must refer to the final determination of character into fixed conditions after death.

In still another passage in Matthew we have proof that the parable of the Sheep and the Goats is fulfilled in days of judgment that take place in this present human life. Matt. vii:21-22 reads as follows, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name have cast out devils, and in Thy name done many wonderful works"? Which implies that they have been prominent teachers and preachers of religion, staunch clergy of some great church, doughty champions of its orthodox views perhaps; able advocates of more than one good cause,—and, in the world's view, quite able and successful men. "And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from me ye that work iniquity." According to the old interpretation this must refer to "the last day" when all the nations of all time will be gathered before the awful judgment throne; and these "many" hypocritical professors and false prophets of unnumbered generations of the past, must each have passed at the time of his death to the place of retribution,—and those who belonged to the earlier generations must have spent a very long time in the world of woe. Yet in the passage they are represented as going right up to the Judge of all the earth with perfect assurance that they are about to receive a place among the blessed. Now, the difference between paradise and perdition is so marked that a man cannot be in one or the other without knowing just where he is. Certainly at least, if a false professor enter perdition he will not for a moment imagine that he is in Heaven. Certainly he will be disabused of his old conceit that it would be all right with him in life or in death. And thus we have reduced the old interpretation of this passage to an absurdity, and these hypocritical professors, who go all the way up to the judgment throne with the self-assurance that they are all right,

and are the favorites of heaven, could not have been in perdition at all; and, therefore, Matt. vii:22 cannot refer to the final judgment or Last Day, but to days of judgment that occur from time to time in the history of mankind. And in Matt. xxv:31-46 the people on the left hand of the Judge have the same kind of unblushing, undaunted assurance as the false prophets and professors in Matt. vii:22-23. They do not doubt that they are very proper, worthy, righteous persons. They answer the Judge, "Lord when did we see Thee hungry, or thirsty, or sick, or in prison, . . . and did not minister unto Thee?" Evidently they, too, have been expecting a place among the blessed. Evidently they have never been in perdition before or they would not be so shockingly surprised at the sentence of the Judge. Hence, also, it becomes quite clear that in the parable of the Sheep and the Goats the primary reference must be to such days of judgment, or days of Divine visitation, as those from which our illustrations have been drawn.

We turn now to Matt. xxiv:29-31, a passage which many regard as referring undoubtedly to the final Coming of Christ and the final Judgment Day. In fact some assert that nothing corresponding to such language as is here used ever occurred in the generation in which Christ lived, and that nothing corresponding to it has occurred in all the generations since that time. We have quoted this passage before and we quote it here again. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and there shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with

power and great glory." The reader will find language very similar to this in Isaiah xiii:10-13. That prophet says, "For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light; the sun shall be darkened in its going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. . . . And I will make the heavens to tremble, and the earth shall be shaken out of its place in the wrath of Jehovah of Hosts," etc. And the context proves that Isaiah was not referring to a second Coming of Christ, or to a final Judgment Day. He was referring to temporal judgments that were coming upon Babylon in the near future. And again in chap. xxiv:23 (see American Revised Version) he says "then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun shall be ashamed, for Jehovah of Hosts shall reign in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem; and before His elders shall be glory." And the context again shows that the reference is to temporal judgments in the world and to the new order of things that would follow. And Ezekiel says, "When I shall extinguish thee, I will cover the heavens, and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give its light. All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over thee, and set darkness upon thy land, saith Jehovah" (Ezekiel xxxii:7-8). And the context shows that he was referring to direful temporal judgments that were to come on Pharaoh King of Egypt. And Joel says, "And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth; blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of Jehovah cometh. And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of Jehovah shall be delivered. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those that escape, as Jehovah hath said, and among the remnant those whom Jehovah doth

call" (Joel ii:31-32). And, once more, the context shows that the prophet is referring to a great crisis in Israel's history and to a new dispensation which he saw was to be ushered in. And the reader will remember that the Apostle Peter quoted this passage on the day of Pentecost. In doing so he also stated that it was in process of fulfilment on that very day. These ancient prophets, therefore, referred again and again to direful temporal judgments and to the ushering in of a new order of things among men, when they spoke of the sun being darkened, and the moon and the stars failing to give their light. Why should we not infer then, as a matter of course, that Matt. xxiv:29-31, using similar language, refers to similar judgments, and to a new and higher order or dispensation that would come into human affairs. Surely it would be a very reasonable presumption, if we should presume, without proof, that something like this is the true explanation of these words.

But these words in Matt. xxiv:29-31 have been the occasion of so much confusion of opinion, and, as we have seen, of so much earnest debate, that we wish to add a few further remarks in an attempt to elucidate their real meaning for us. First, then, will the reader note that Jesus did not invariably discard or avoid the terms that were commonly employed by the Jews in stating their religious views. On the contrary he adopted and made frequent use of some of them. For instance, the Jews were expecting a theocracy: a form of government in which God would be supreme; a literal Kingdom of God on earth; a government in which a kingly Messiah would rule with a just and beneficent sway. But their conceptions of this kingdom were more or less materialistic; they thought of it as resembling their nation in King David's prosperous days. But Jesus did not avoid the phrase "Kingdom of God" because of their erroneous

view. He used it in a larger sense and associated it with a spiritual meaning. In doing this Jesus was, in a way, going back to the view that must have been in the mind of the Prophet Samuel when the Israelites requested that they might have a king as the other nations had. And the request displeased and grieved him very much. He would have preferred that Jehovah should be their king; and that the nation under Him should be pervaded by the influence, and obedient to the teaching, of faithful prophets who would know Jehovah's mind. This would have been a kingdom in a more spiritual sense: a kingdom borne ever onward to higher moral standards and to purer conceptions of God.

In a similar way we may explain our Lord's use of the symbolical expressions in Matt. xxiv:29-31. These expressions were in common use among the Jews of His time. As Biblical scholars would say, "they were the current Eschatological terms," or the terms used in expressing the current Eschatological hope—Eschatology being the science of the Last Things, or that branch of theology that treats of such subjects as the Final Judgment, the consummation of the Messiah's reign, the ultimate rewards of the righteous, the final vindication of Divine Justice, the punishment of the wicked, etc. As we noted in the first chapter of this book, thoughtful and influential Jews were looking forward to a stupendous crisis in human affairs; to an apocalyptic consummation of Jewish hopes; to an overwhelming judgment on their nation's enemies, to be followed by a "transcendental reign of the Messiah," in which the Jewish race would be exceedingly prospered and blessed; although Jesus was, of course, not according to their idea of a Messiah; they had no thought of accepting Him. As we saw in the first chapter, their opinion was that this consummation was not indefinitely far off. These apocalyptic views

and these vague hopes were all prevalent at the time among the mystical and devout of the Jewish race; and in the Chapter on Paul's views, and in our discussion of the passage about Satan being bound for a thousand years, we shall see that this apocalyptic literature, and these current apocalyptic views, had a most profound influence on the thinking of the early church. The more studious reader may follow this question up by reading such works as the Books of Enoch, Psalms of the Pharisees, the Apocalypse of Ezra, the Apocalypse of Baruch, etc. The Apocalypse of Ezra, by the way, is the second Esdras of the Apocrypha of the Old Testament. The Book of Daniel in the Old Testament (written about 168 B.C.), and the Book of Revelation in the New Testament (written about 93 A.D.) are examples of Apocalyptic works. Christian readers in general will find the main characteristics of the apocalyptic writings in these two books.

We must now explain the difference between the apocalyptic writer and the prophet. The prophet was a man of his own day. He had intense and sympathetic interest in the social conditions and common interests in the midst of which he lived. And he had spiritual insight into the workings of present-day tendencies and forces and events. He saw a divine ordering of them, and a divine overruling of them. Hence he could see how the natural course of events was going to bring deliverance or retribution to the Jewish people, according to their faithfulness or unfaithfulness to Jehovah, according to their obedience or disobedience to His law; and, as we have seen in the examples of Isaiah and Ezekiel and Joel, the prophets, in their addresses and in their writings, made use at times of symbols in order to make their messages of comfort or of warning more intelligible or more forcible to those who heard, or to those who read.

The apocalyptic writers, on the other hand, seemed to have but little of this spiritual insight. Their outlook on present conditions was pessimistic. They had little faith in the natural course of things ever being the means of any adequate vindication of Divine justice, of any Providential deliverance for the righteous, or of any Providential or adequate punishment of the wicked. They could see only present misery, and hope for some miraculous deliverance altogether outside of the natural order of things. The purpose, however, of both the prophetic and the apocalyptic writers was to encourage the faith of God's people in a coming deliverance.

Now, will the critical reader note that Jesus did not think in the modes in which the apocalyptic writers thought. He was a prophet Himself—He was the consummate prophet of the human race—and He thought in the modes in which the prophets thought. It would have been unnatural to Him to think in any other way. It is true that in Matt. xxiv:29-31 He employed the terms commonly used by apocalyptic writers of the day; but He employed them in another sense than which apocalyptic writers used them, just as He used the phrase "Kingdom of God" in another sense than which the Jews in general used it. In doing this He was going back to the prophets' way of using symbols to illustrate their meaning, just as in the other case, He was going back, as one might say, to the Prophet Samuel's way of thinking of the Kingdom of God. He was going back to a meaning that was similar to that which the Prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel and Joel had when they used similar language, only He was referring to a more tremendous crisis in the history of the world, and to a more comprehensive and more spiritual new order that was to be ushered in.

We cannot see eye to eye with the critics on this passage. Some of them would have us understand that Jesus did not use the words in Matt. xxiv:29-31 at all. They say that this passage is "a Christian adaptation of an originally Jewish work written in 67-68 A.D. during the trouble preceding the fall of Jerusalem."* And Dr. R. H. Charles, whom we have just quoted, says that "Christ expected to return during the existing generation," and he quotes Mark ix:1, and Matt. xvi:28 in proof. To this statement we fully ASSENT. But on the next page he states that "we must admit that this expectation of Christ was falsified." From this statement we utterly DISSENT. Christ DID come again according to His words, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. xxiv:35). And some other critics say "there must be some mistake in the words in Matt. xxiv:34, 'Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away till all of these things be fulfilled.'" And again we earnestly dissent. We believe that Jesus DID use the words which the critic calls "an adaptation" from a later work; and we believe that the disciples reported the words of Jesus correctly, even when the meaning of those words was not clear to them. We believe that before His ministry began the mind of Jesus had broken through the spell of the current apocalyptic view.

But some may say "Was not this way of using language calculated to mystify or mislead?" We reply, either He had to use terms that were familiar to His hearers, and associate them with a true and more spiritual meaning, or else He had to invent or originate new terms, and new phraseology, unfamiliar to the people, in which to represent his

* From a work by R. H. Charles, D.D., D.Litt., of Oxford University on "A Critical History of the Doctrine of the Future Life." See Chapter on the Synoptic Gospels, chap. ix, p. 384.

meaning. The latter way would not have relieved the difficulty. The real trouble was that His hearers—both His disciples and the Jews in general—were so prepossessed by their own eschatological views that they would not have accepted His meaning if He had given it to them in literal speech. Just as for a similar reason the disciples, in Matt. xiv:22 and Mark ix:10, did not believe Him when He told them that He was to be delivered up and be put to death and rise again. Their minds were pre-occupied with another view that was incompatible with this. So in Matt. xxiv:29-31 Jesus deliberately took the former way. He deliberately used the current and familiar phraseology with a view to the later day in which His larger, more spiritual meanings, would dawn upon the world. On the same principle He spoke in parables “to them that are without that seeing they might see and not perceive, and hearing they might hear, and not understand” (Mark iv:11-12). His hearers would not have understood Him in either case, whether He used figurative or literal speech.

We trust that we have somewhat cleared the way of difficulties, and we proceed now to a more particular explanation. The sun is a symbol of God. The Psalmist recognized this when he wrote the lines “The Lord God is a sun and shield” (Psalm lxxxiv:11.) “And the sun shall be darkened.” If any one had told a zealous Jew two or three years before the event that Jerusalem would be destroyed and trampled underfoot; that its temple would be desecrated and laid in ruins by uncircumcised, idolatrous Roman soldiers—he would have said that it cannot be. God in Heaven would not permit the like. If such a thing should take place we would say “there is no God.” But all of this *did take place*, and to the Jews the view of God was darkened for the time.

"And the moon shall not give her light." The moon is a symbol of the church—it shines with a borrowed light. The Jewish nation was the church, the organized religious body of that day. And it failed to give the people the light and leading which they needed when the hour of destiny arrived. And, as we have seen, the church has failed in a similar way again and again in the trying days before the great Divine visitations of history appeared.

"And the stars shall fall from Heaven." The stars are symbols of the great religious teachers of the times. And how often has this also been fulfilled. We have seen it even in recent years. Nothing more pagan-like can be imagined than some of the deliverances of some of the prominent German clergy during the early part of the war. They sought to encourage the German people, as the chosen people of God, and the German Government, as the chosen instruments of God, to prosecute their ruthless submarine warfare and the other barbarous and fiendish practices, which they, not impulsively and intermittently, but deliberately and systematically, have carried on. And when the new world that will follow the war shall be ushered in, these German state-paid clergy, too, shall fall like the falling stars.

"And the powers of the heavens shall be shaken." This means that the authority of the existing religious orders shall be shaken; they shall lose their influence, and shall no longer hold the confidence of men. The great mind of Sir Isaac Newton recognized "the powers of the heavens" as signifying the authorities of the religious sphere.*

"And there shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in

*From a theological treatise by Sir Isaac Newton, written in the latter part of his life and published in 1733 (after his death), entitled "Observations on the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John."

heaven." Before the great regenerating movement, which is the *real* Divine visitation, is ushered in, there usually appears some partial or preliminary movement which is good so far as it goes; but it is incomplete, it is not far-reaching enough. It flourishes for a while; but it is not destined to be more than a temporary success, because it is not guided by a strong, constructive thinker, or by a real statesman, whose field of vision is the world. Thus John the Baptist came before Jesus; but his work, though valuable as a preparation, was incomplete. He was a sign of what was coming. And Savonarola came a little while before Martin Luther. He was an earnest moral and social and political reformer, and the sphere of his work was Florence and the Italian church and state. He denounced prevailing corruptions as fearlessly and vigorously as Luther ever did; but he was too local—he had not the world-vision for a universal movement. And in the great anti-slavery movement in America William Lloyd Garrison appeared upon the scene before Henry Ward Beecher and Abraham Lincoln appeared. Garrison was a very earnest and conscientious man, a moral hero who would never swerve from the right as he saw it; but he had no adequate view of the questions of practical statesmanship that were involved, as Beecher and Lincoln had. His denunciation of slavery aroused the conscience of the nation, and this denunciation prepared the way for abolition; but his work alone never would have carried the movement to a triumphant issue. It had to be followed by the work of stronger and wiser men. But each of these preliminary movements was a sign of a more sweeping, constructive, universal movement. It was a sign of the Divine visitation that was drawing near.

"And then shall all of the tribes of the land mourn"—for the Greek word $\gamma\eta$ (here translated "earth"), means

"land," and is so translated in twenty-five places in the Gospels alone, for instance in Matt. xxv:47, "There was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour." The tribes of the Jewish race had resisted and fought this Jesus of Nazareth and His followers unto the bitter end; now they would see his influence broadening out into a vast movement among the nations, of the results of which they could see no end: and so all the tribes of the land—not all the tribes of the earth—would mourn, "And they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." "Clouds" are symbols of mystery and perplexity and confusion of opinion in the religious sphere. As it is put in the Gospel according to Luke, "there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring" (Luke xxi:25-26). The sea is a great symbol of society in general. It is sometimes murmuring; sometimes sobbing; sometimes raging in terrific storm. And human society in general sometimes has its subdued anxieties and griefs; sometimes it is sobbing as in the event of the death of some great national or international favorite or hero like Lord Nelson or Abraham Lincoln; and sometimes it has its fits of moral or immoral indignation over some political or national event. So that the passage means that when good men are anxiously saying "what is the world coming to," and when the hearts of men in general are "failing them for fear and for looking after those things that are coming on the earth," there shall appear a glorious Divine visitation, a great spiritual, regenerating, uplifting movement; a new manifestation of the "presence" of the Son of Man; a new appearing of His Kingdom on Earth with power.

And now we must pause and quarrel with the critics again

for a moment or two. We are aware that they will look askance and doubtfully at the foregoing explanations. Charles, from whom we have quoted before, says that the expression "Sign of the Son of Man" is unknown in Jewish apocalyptic and in early Christian works, and he offers an ingenious explanation of its appearance in Matt. xxiv:30—an explanation which only readers of the Hebrew language would understand. But we would reply No, Charles; you are miles away from the mark: you can compile facts, you are a learned and able critic, but you do not understand revivals of religion or movements of the spiritual life. And Jesus was immeasurably greater, both intellectually and spiritually, than you have believed him to be. He saw the plan of human history. He knew the characteristics of the great religious epochs in which the Divine Spirit comes in power to men. And He used the words "The sign of the Son of Man" purposely and deliberately. He used them, as he used the others, to express a certain definite idea that was in His mind. We are not reading our twentieth century ideas into His words. We are reading out instead of reading in; we are carefully and deliberately unfolding now what Jesus consciously and deliberately infolded then. He saw that this symbolical language would exactly serve the purpose which a parable serves: certain facts of the natural realm, sun, moon, stars, clouds, etc., correspond to certain facts in the spiritual realm; certain conditions in the natural realm, the darkening of the sun, the failing of the moon and stars, etc., correspond to certain conditions in the spiritual realm; just as certain parts of a parable correspond to certain conditions in our human nature or certain facts in the spiritual realm; just as in the Parable of the Sower, for instance, the different kinds of soil correspond to different conditions in the heart of man—and the corre-

spondences are not more evident in the one case than in the other. The average intelligent layman, we think, will see them as soon as they are pointed out; only of course the passage requires to be stripped first of traditional interpretations; and these have arisen largely because of the misleading translation of the word for "angels," as we showed in Chapter IV. The substitution of the word "messengers" for "angels" makes the meaning clear.

"And He shall send forth His messengers with a great sound of a trumpet and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Just as the tribes of Israel in ancient days were assembled together by the trumpet's call (see Exodus xix:13, 16, 19; Psalm lxxxi:3-5; Isaiah xxvii:13), so the church and the world shall be aroused by some great call to repentance; and God's people shall be lifted into hope by some great proclamation of a gospel message; and, as we saw in the Chapter on "Misleading Translations," the messengers shall gather them together into assemblies or groups. And thus we see how reasonable is the true explanation of all this figurative language in Matt. xxiv:29-31 and Luke xxi:25-26; and we see how applicable this language is to the signs and events that went before the destruction of Jerusalem and the supreme event that followed after, namely, the Spiritual visitation by the Son of Man.

We sum up our argument then. Matt. xxiv:30 states that "they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory; and He shall send forth His messengers with a great sound of a trumpet and gather His elect together," etc., another way of saying that He shall divide society. And Matt. xxv:31, etc., says "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory and all the holy messengers with Him then shall He sit upon the throne

of His glory . . . and He shall separate them one from the other as the shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats," etc. Both statements occur in the same discourse; both are in answer to the same threefold question of Matt. xxiv:3; in both we have the Son of Man coming in glory; in both we have the messengers with Him; in both we have the dividing of society. No one can reasonably doubt that both refer to the same event, the same coming of the Son of Man. But we have shown that Matt. xxiv:29-31 was fulfilled in a great Spiritual visitation in the period of Christ's own generation. Therefore Matt. xxv:31, etc., was also fulfilled in a great Spiritual visitation in Christ's own day. Hence the separation of society into the sheep and the goats takes place before the consummation of human history in a final Judgment Day. And the poet's intuition agrees with a correct exposition of the passage,—

"Some great cause, God's new Messiah,
Offering each the bloom or blight,
Parts the goats upon the left hand
From the sheep upon the right."

But it has been said that Scripture teaching on the Coming is associated with finality. "It is the last scene; after that comes the judgment and the giving over of the kingdom to the Father," and the words in Matt. xxiv:14 might be quoted as a proof, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations, and then shall the end come"; and we reply, the Coming of Christ was indeed associated with finality in the Gospels, but it was the finality of the Jewish people as a nation; it was the end of their holy city as a centre of worship for God's people; it was the finality of the old Jewish dispensation; it was the culmination of their long mission as the peculiar people of God; it was a tremendous crisis in the Kingdom

of God, and no wonder it was spoken of as "the end"; but it was not the end of human history on earth, although we, of course, admit that the great passage in 1 Cor. xv:23-28 does refer to the consummation of earthly affairs, "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and all power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet, and the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."

But our expositions and illustrations have not been intended to explain away the doctrine of a final Judgment Day. There is to be such a day, although the Scripture teaching in regard to it is not very full. There is to be a sublime and triumphant consummation of human history, after all of its chequered periods of aspiration and hope, of happiness and failure; after all of its protracted ages of longing and struggle, of hunger and agony, and woe and death. Our Lord says, "And this is the will of Him that sent me that of all which He hath given me I should lose nothing but should raise it up at the last day. The "It" implies that the entire body of believers are to be raised up. "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone that seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, should have eternal life; and I will raise Him up at the last day" (John vi:39-40). "Marvel not at this, the hour is coming in which all that are in their graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation," or condemnation (John v:28-29). "He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my words hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John xii:48). And no doubt the great and final division of collective humanity into the

sheep and the goats will be accomplished, on a universal scale, in a consummate and transcendent manner, on that last day; or figuratively speaking, before that final and awful judgment throne. But the reader will note that in the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats, Jesus says nothing about the resurrection of the dead; and this omission agrees with our interpretation of it as a description of the separations that take place in the periods of human history in which the Divine visitations take place. And in the passages about the "last day," just quoted from the Gospel according to John, Jesus does not explicitly say that the raising of the dead would be preceded by the Second Coming or final manifestation of Himself. He does not say that the one would occur just before the other. But HE DOES SAY, "All that are in their graves shall HEAR HIS VOICE and shall come forth," etc. And this distinctly implies the Second Coming or final manifestation as associated with the resurrection of the dead. No doubt Jesus taught much more fully on this subject when He was discoursing with the Jews; and no doubt Paul, before his conversion a little later, was a special student of this teaching of Jesus. And as a contemporary and a controversialist he would thoroughly master his opponents' views. Before beginning to argue against the Christians he would find out what they had learned from Jesus; and he would learn much more of what Jesus taught on this subject than we can find in the Gospels to-day. And from these teachings of Jesus Paul would derive his assurance that at the Final Coming of Christ "the trumpet" shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Cor. xv:52); and "the trumpet" in this verse signifies "the voice of the Son of God" in John v:28. Thus Paul associates the resurrection of the dead, the final triumphant consum-

mation of human history, with the Final Coming of Christ, with His visible appearing to judge the world. Later on in his ministry, when he was a prisoner in Rome, Paul again expressed his assurance in regard to Christ's appearing, and in regard to the transformation of this mortal body which His coming would bring. He says, "For our citizenship is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change the body of our humiliation, that it may be fashioned like unto the body of His glory, according to the mighty working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. iii:20-21 R.V.). And in the latest hours of a second imprisonment he finds comfort in the assurance of a "crown laid up" for him, and not for him only, "but for all them also who love *His appearing*" (2 Tim. iv:8). This must refer to final rewards and to a final coming of Christ. But the attentive reader will have read our Preface. He will remember that it is outside the purpose of this book to discuss this Final Coming and the ultimate consummation of human history. That coming and that consummation may be a thousand years away. It may be ten thousand years away. It is not for us to know. All reckoning in regard to this is wasted time; and the experiences of those who have reckoned in the past, and have failed, should be lesson enough for us. Besides, our Lord's words do not encourage us in making such an attempt. He says, "It is not for you to know the times or seasons [or epochs] which the Father hath set within His own authority, or hath appointed by His own authority" (Acts i:7 R.V.). But it is permitted to us, indeed it may be profitable to us, to look at the signs of the times, and consider whether another great Spiritual visitation may not be drawing near. Our Lord seems to express wonder that the Pharisees could not see

the signs of *their* own times: which suggests that people who are spiritual should have discerning power enough to be able to see the signs of the times in *our* own day.

There is one objection more, one so far-fetched as to be scarcely worth taking notice of, we think. It is said that we are making dangerous assumptions. That if Christ's teachings about His coming again are fulfilled in the great IMPERSONAL spiritual visitations of history, then it must follow that Christ's final coming may be nothing more than an impersonal spiritual visitation; that we are virtually denying Christ's personal final coming in the glorious body altogether; that "whatever may be affirmed of the one class of fulfilments may be truly affirmed of the final fulfilment also." But we reply that the objection itself is based on a false assumption to start with. The assumption is that these great spiritual visitations were really impersonal. And they were not. Each of them was ushered in by a man who was the incarnation of the movement. Thus Bernard of Clairvaux was "the moral arbiter of Europe" in his time; the great moral and spiritual forces of Europe in the twelfth century were centred in that one man. And Martin Luther embodied the protest of mankind against the perversions of religion in his day. And John Wesley was the great central figure in the evangelical revival of his day. In men like these Christ's words were fulfilled, "In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father and ye in me and I in you" (John xiv:20). And these spiritual visitations were anything but impersonal we repeat. And our interpretations are not in the least incompatible with the doctrine of Christ's personal coming in the Last Day. We accept as sufficient proof of that doctrine the passages which we quoted from John's Gospel and from Paul's writings on a previous page.

CHAPTER VIII.

PARABLES OF SEPARATION: THE WHEAT AND THE TARES; THE MAN WHO HID HIS TALENT.

WE give here the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares, and our Lord's explanation of the same; and we shall proceed to show that this parable also is fulfilled in the great spiritual awakenings and reformations that mark the eras of the history of mankind. Matt. xiii:24-30 and 36-43:

"24 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The Kingdom of Heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:

"25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

"26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

"27 So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?

"28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

"29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

"30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

"36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house; and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field.

"37 He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man;

"38 The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one;

"39 The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.

"40 As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this age.

"41 The Son of Man shall send forth his messengers, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity;

"42 And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

"43 Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."

When a great uplifting revival, or a truly Christian reformation, with a world-wide outlook, comes to the church, as a rule a new statement of Christian doctrine is one of the results. Some great truth or truths that were practically unknown to men in general, some of Christ's teachings that had been only partially recognized even by the thoughtful few, come suddenly and prominently into view; they are discussed pro and con. (for and against) by the educated classes; and they become the subject of general conversation among people in the ordinary ranks. Older truths, or truths longer known, and the newer views, become mixed up together; all sorts of reckless, misleading, damaging statements are made as to what the new religionists believe. So that the old truths and the new views require to be put into a new setting in which their real harmony will be manifest. In other words, they require to be exactly and guardedly stated as doctrines, that there may be some generally accepted standards to guide the thoughts of people who sympathize with the new movement, to protect them from misrepresentation by those who oppose, and to inform honest and open-minded people who really desire to know the facts; and the new statement of doctrine is some great thinker and teacher's work. Thus in the first century Paul prepared the doctrinal statements for the Christians of that day. He did this from the stand-

point of a converted Jew who understood the old, and understood the new; he understood the old by tradition and early training, and understood the new by revelation and experience; and his wonderful Epistles to Galatians, Romans, Corinthians, Ephesians, etc., informed contemporary people as to what the Gentile Christians believed, and in a great degree, they shaped the thinking of Christian people for centuries to come. And during the Reformation John Calvin prepared the doctrinal statements of the Reformed churches in the clearest and most transparent language, with special emphases on Divine sovereignty and Predestination and Civil Liberty; and thus he largely shaped the thinking and the character of the great Puritan period; and his influence had much to do in evolving the free institutions under which the British and the American peoples are ruled.* Calvin did his work from the standpoint of a converted adherent of the Roman Catholic Church. He also understood the old truth and had an open mind to the light of the new day as well. We repeat that the new doctrinal statement is one result of the new reformation or new quickening of the spiritual life; and, as a rule, some great religious organization, or organizations, that is designed to extend its influence or perpetuate its work, is another result. Thus the Protestant churches, Lutheran and Reformed, are the result of the Protestant Reformation, and the Methodist churches are the result of the great revival that began in England about one hundred and seventy years ago.

Now the doctrinal statement and the religious organization, or ecclesiastical system, are quite important; but they

* The present author has written an estimate of the character and life and work of John Calvin. The reader will find this in the Appendix to this Volume. (See NOTE C.)

are not the essential part of the movement. The essential part is something more ethereal, more spiritual, more difficult to apprehend or grasp, and immeasurably more valuable than either of these. In a field of healthy, growing grain the questions that touch the essential are not, What kind of plow was used in turning over the sod? or What kind of drill or implement was used in sowing or planting the seed? or What kind of fence surrounds the field? The essential things are the principle of life in the grain itself, and the forces of nature that co-operate—the sunshine, the showers, the nutritive elements in the soil. Just as in the new uplifting movement the essential things are the new vision of God, the awakened sense of “the Unseen Presence,” the new vision of privilege and duty, the new sympathy and enthusiasm for mankind in their oppression and ignorance, or degradation and woe.

For a time in the earlier stages of the moral and religious movement, when its spiritual life and enthusiasm are full and high, the sacrifices involved in entering into it are so great that the hypocritical, the formal and the worldly are kept outside. There are many people who are not willing to cast off religion altogether; who will not entirely renounce all matters of religious faith; who do not wish to be considered immoral or profane; who like to retain a religious profession, and observe religious worship, and support some “respectable” church; but they refuse to go the length of self-renunciation for the sake of Christ, or for the sake of those who represent Him best upon this earth; they are not willing to separate completely from the life of worldly pleasure or interest or ambition for the sake of spiritual privileges which they cannot understand: to sum up, they wish to be religious in a “proper” way, and in a “reasonable” degree, but they simply will not submit to

the demands of a spiritual life. And people of this class will not give themselves up to a new movement, when those who are promoting it, and those who are drawn into it are generally considered fanatics and dupes, and when they are called "Lollards" or "Puritans" or "Quakers" or "Methodists" or some other name equally expressive of contempt. The tests are too severe; the conditions are too hard—and they prefer the broader way.

But the enthusiasm and the spiritual life of the new movement does not always remain full and high. It is like a tide upon the ocean beach; it reaches a certain climax and then it begins to recede; and when it has reached its lowest and most deplorable conditions of reaction and decline, the doctrinal statements and the religious organization still remain. Meanwhile new truths have come into view, which the old statements do not express, or with which they do not agree, or which they simply contradict. The old standards have become inadequate on account of the larger vision of the new times. And the old organization is no longer distinguished by enthusiasm; and although a large number of honest, good, devoted souls are in it, with all of its wealth or social prestige, it has only a comparatively feeble and languid life. Meanwhile new problems are looming up, the solution of which calls for all of the old-time enthusiasm and power, and thus J. Russell Lowell's familiar words are fulfilled again:

"New occasions teach new duties;
Time makes ancient good uncouth;
They must upward still and onward
Who would keep abreast of truth."

In a former chapter we explained the parable of the servants and the talents that were committed to them before the lord left them confidingly and went away into a distant

land; and we referred to the beginning of moral and spiritual decline. Those who were once earnest and enthusiastic relax their vigilance; testimony becomes less positive; the worldly spirit creeps in; little compromises and neglects of duty become common; the new movement, by its tested merit, at length has subdued the prejudices of the world; the conditions of "joining the church" become easier, the tests become less severe, and multitudes of semi-religious and semi-worldly people, whom we have just described, come in; and thus the churches come at length to contain large numbers of people who were never converted at all; who, as John Bunyan would say, never entered at the wicket gate, but just climbed over the wall or got into the path by some easier way. And men with no rich endowment of human sympathy or of imagination or of ideals; men who seem formed for business and immediate interests and little else; critical, non-constructive, intellectual men—intellectual in a degree we mean to say—become prominent in the councils of the church. And the old system of doctrinal statements has become like an old stem with a few withered branches that still stick to the main stock when the autumn period has well nigh gone; and the thoughts of such men still adhere tenaciously to this stem, and circle about it in a sort of mechanical way till they lose the freshness and flavor of reality and sympathy; till they become out of date and shrivelled like the system itself which has had its day. Men of *this class* think in this mechanical way because they have closed their eyes to newly-discovered facts, because they are in a wrong attitude toward truth and life, and toward the Holy Spirit who is the Spirit of Truth; and they strive to rule the thinking and the intelligence of the church, and they abuse those who do not agree with them as treacherous enemies of the faith. And on the other hand

worldly-minded, time-serving, self-seeking men, to whom the religious organization or visible church, instead of being a spiritual home and a place of spiritual delights, is a sort of hiding-place under whose cover their real character and spirit are more or less concealed and screened from view—men of these classes, in a considerable degree, determine the attitude and dominate the policy of the church. And will the reader note for a moment in passing how admirably our Lord hits off these two classes of men in a few brief lines? He says “But if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth His coming, and shall begin to beat His fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken,” etc. “Beat his fellow-servants!” This refers to men of the former class, men who have the despotic, dogmatic spirit, the spirit that assumes dominion over the faith of others (see 2 Cor. i:24); the spirit of the narrow-minded and bigoted religious persecutor. “Shall begin to eat and drink with the drunken.” This on the other hand, refers to preachers and to church officials who are popular with the worldly, because they have so much of the world spirit in themselves; who have more of the spirit of self-indulgence, and of easy indifference to spiritual religion, than the *former class*. “The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour when he is not aware, and shall severely scourge him and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites,” as Matthew says (see the margin of Matt. xxiv:51); this refers to men of the *former class*; or he shall appoint him his portion with the unfaithful, as Luke says (see Luke xii:46 R.V.); this refers to men of the *latter class*. And thus we have not been exposing some one particular set of individuals merely, and we have not been invidiously exposing some one particular church, but we

have been setting forth universal experience and universal law. And hence how evident it is that our Lord in this passage is speaking of things that take place in this human life, in every epoch-making revival, and not of some far off and final judgment day.

We have now obtained a clear view of two facts: first, a large number of sincere, devout, good people are in the church; second, a large number of another class have surreptitiously come in; and so the sincere and the formal, the earnest and the superficial, the genuine and the spurious, the true and the false, the good and the evil, become associated and mixed up together in the same denomination and apparently in the same work; and time goes on and separation or judgment does not take place. All of the meaning of our lengthy preceding paragraphs has been condensed by our Lord into one brief statement, "While men slept his enemy came and sowed tares, and went his way." And the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares illustrates, not the separation that takes place in the world in general—the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats illustrates that—but it illustrates the separation that takes place within the church as a religious organization; the separation of those associated elements of the superficial and the genuine, the evil and the good, etc., which to us is mysteriously delayed till the next great Spiritual visitation or awakening shall take place. In the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares, the good and the evil resemble each other for a time: formal Christians and real Christians in their outward appearance are very much alike. It was not till the blade was sprung up and brought forth fruit, till it began to appear in heads, that the servants noticed that something foreign and noxious was growing along with the wheat. But in the other parable the good are sheep and the evil are goats; there is

no resemblance; the difference is manifest at a glance, and manifest throughout. In the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares the relations of the good and the evil are more intimate; they grow side by side; their associations are closer; their interests and feelings are more or less intertwined, just as the roots of the wheat and the tares were more or less intertwined, and, in places, adhered to one another. In the other parable, the two may be as much apart as the pious and good church member on the one hand and the gambler and the profane on the other hand, who never go to church at all. It is true "the field is the world"; but the influence of such movements as we have been considering reaches out and affects the universal church; and the universal church has the world for a field. In the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares, because the relationships are so intimate and the interests so interlinked, it is such a difficult and delicate thing to separate the two, that the work has to be postponed till the appointed time—the season when they shall both be ripe. Moreover in the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats the ground of division is the rendering of service, or the neglect of service, toward "the messengers." In the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares the ground of division is the inherent, and for a time, unrecognized difference in character before "the messengers" appeared; and character in both cases requires time to mature and bring forth its own natural fruit; and this is a further reason why the work of separation is so long delayed. In God's mercy even the hypocrite is given a long space in which to repent; although, of course, this latter truth is incidental—it was not our Lord's immediate purpose to teach it in the parable about the tares. But we proceed to illustrate more fully the reasons why the separation is delayed till a special or appointed time.

There are times when the multitudes are murmuring, or crying, and full of discontent; when they are suffering grievous and oppressive wrongs. How these wrongs can be righted consistently with the interests of the general commonwealth; how their interests can be secured without injustice to the party on the other side; what conflicts of interest and of privilege may result from the attempt to apply a remedy—has never given them an hour's concern. Statesmanlike plans are outside the range of their narrow view. But the ceaseless burden of their complaint is that they are grievously and wickedly oppressed; and fair-minded men acknowledge that their complaint is just. And at such times there are men who have a certain natural sense of justice, and a certain natural sympathy with the unprivileged class, and a certain gift of captivating popular address, but no surplus amount of wisdom, and little talent for diplomacy, and certainly no endowment of spiritual vision; men who have never studiously considered the deeper questions of human life, and who leap to conclusions without careful investigation or review. Men of the foregoing class, whom we call "demagogues," forge ahead as leaders. Having no clear historical retrospect, and no broad, statesmanlike outlook, they expect that, upon their appeal, there will be a stampede away from institutions, and usages, and modes of thinking, and modes of administration that have become deep-rooted in the nation's life. But the appeal fails to sway the nation in the expected way. The uprising or the movement results in ignominious failure, and the cry of the oppressed takes on a deeper note, as hope sinks to a lower and more depressing depth. The extreme and reckless radical has set the cause of progress back as much as the extreme conservative or reactionary could have done. The whole venture was inopportune and

ill-advised. The time was not ripe, the critical, predestined hour had not yet arrived. The divinely appointed leaders had not yet appeared. In truth they were not yet fully prepared; the Providential way of deliverance had not yet clearly opened to their view; they are musing, burdened and unrecognized, in secret places; and time goes on, and justice is deferred, the multitudes still labor and suffer, the good and the evil still grow together, for the time of the harvest, the time of judgment and separation is not yet. "How long, O Lord, how long?"

Again there are times when circumstances and events and world-wide conditions are more favorable than at other times; and for these the all-wise and benevolent God is waiting, and His faithful people, and the oppressed and wondering multitudes must also wait. We might ask for instance, why was the first coming of Christ delayed so long? And the separation which His coming brought between priests and Pharisees and Sadducees on the one hand, and the disciples and the multitudes on the other, why did it not take place at an earlier date? Why did the world have to wait so long and so wearily for the coming of the first Christmas Day? Because the time when He did come was foreseen and foreknown to be the best time, the most favorable time. It was the time when the known world was practically under one government, bound together in one great organization, that of the great Empire of Rome; when there was a universal language in which to propagate the gospel—the beautiful, flexible, expressive, melodious language of the Greeks; and when the older civilizations had reached their culmination, and were hastening to decay. For that time, we say it reverently, God also had to wait. And why was the other coming of which we read in Matt. chap. xxiv delayed for forty years or more after

Christ had risen, and the Holy Spirit had been given, and all things were ready as far as God's provisions were concerned? (Matt. xxii:1-4), Why was the coming so delayed? Because, as we have seen, the influence of the Jewish party in the church would have cramped Christian life and Christian doctrine, and have kept it within little, narrow, traditional Jewish bounds; and everything was waiting for the complete destruction of Jerusalem and the scattering of the Jewish race to set the Christian church free forever from the influence of that Jewish party, and leave it with scope for universal outlook, universal movement and universal life. And why was the Great Reformation so long delayed? Because it also was waiting for the best time, the most advantageous period, when, as we have seen, the new learning and the invention of printing would be in its favor, and when conditions in Germany would be such that the great Luther, by his proclamation, would not only awaken the moral and spiritual forces, but would rally to his side political influences and German princes, who had been alienated more or less by the exactions and impositions of a church whose seat of authority was in a foreign land. And thus there is an appointed time—a predestined time—for the separation to take place. As the harvest is the season, in the prearranged order of nature, in which the gathering must be done, just so in the spiritual realm we must wait for the period when the Son of Man shall say again, "the time is fulfilled,"—the time for which the ages have been a preparation—"the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." All of the meaning of the foregoing paragraphs has been condensed by our Lord into this brief line, "let them both grow together till the time of the harvest." The least amount of injury will be done to the wheat, or, speaking literally, the least possible injury will be done to the

cause of righteousness and truth, and the greatest possible amount of good and abiding results will be saved, through the postponement of the separation till the appointed time. We now proceed still further to illustrate this truth.

In actual history we see that the new Divine visitation,—the new regenerating movement—gets some distance on its way before all sincere, good people can see it as such, and give it their hearty and conscientious approval and support. They can see the need of it; they can see the conditions of oppression or of moral decay that call for divine interposition or relief—and they are praying that such interposition or relief may come. But in some cases they continue praying till some time after their prayers have been answered, and after the regenerating movement has actually begun. They are slow to see it because the new movement is not according to their preconceived views of what such a movement ought to be. They are like the church praying for the deliverance of Peter when he was in prison (Acts xii:11-17). Even after their prayers had been answered and Peter had been set free, and had come and knocked at the door of the house where the good people were praying, he had to stand and wait, and continue knocking for a while, because they could not believe the word of the maiden who told them that he was really there. Even after the Methodist Revival had been going on for some time many good people were cautiously considering it; and tardily admitting some of its good results; and critically noting any of its extravagant features; and deliberately balancing its merits and demerits—but giving it only scanty and carefully measured sympathy and help. But they were not convinced that it was the answer to all good people's prayers. They could not see that it was the Providential way of saving the lapsed masses of men. They could not recognize that it was a

coming of the Son of Man. And after deliberating they would decide not to join the Methodists, but to continue in the old religious bodies, and manifest their sympathy with evangelical religion in a more "regular" and "moderate" and "reasonable" way. And when the Great Reformation of the sixteenth century began, not all of the good, religious people in the Roman Catholic Church cast in their lot with the Protestant movement at once. Many of them did not fail to notice that this new leader Luther had his serious faults; that he was too impetuous, and according to their view, too ready to break away from the great traditions of the past; and so they hesitated and held off, and at length united in the great counter reformation in the Church of Rome. And it is natural that such Christians at such times should be slow to see, slow to decide, and slow to act.

"We see dimly in the present,
What is small and what is great."

It is not easy to separate from traditions and institutions that have been linked with precious memories of other days. It was natural that the Jewish Christians should still cling to "the customs which Moses had delivered," and to modes in which their fathers had worshipped, and to institutions which commemorated great deliverances and great victories. It was natural that they should be slow to appreciate the work of Paul who was leaving behind things which they cherished, and advancing views for which they were not prepared. It was excusable, in a degree, if they did not see and understand the place that he was filling in the history of the world. It was natural that the Roman Catholic Christians should be slow to leave the church in which saintly men and women like Bernard and Francis, and Catherine of Siena and Joan of Arc, had done glorious work, and had

found comfort and joy in the hour and article of death. And besides, the prejudices of those times have now passed away. Criticism has reviewed the work of men like Paul, Luther, Calvin and Wesley. It has pronounced upon their endowments and their merits, and history has given them their proper place. But in their own day they were new men. Their work and their merits had not been so fully proved, and the mists of their times had not cleared away.

There is an element of conservatism in human nature. It is especially strong in people of the Jewish race, and in people of the Anglo-Saxon race. We both dislike change. We both have sometimes been deceived; and we both have often proved the old, tried ways to be the best; and the questions to be considered before changing are difficult. To come face to face with new and disturbing facts; to meet them with an open mind; to become unsettled in one's thoughts on the greatest of all questions; to part with traditional views, and perhaps with happy associations of early days; to appear to drift away from old moorings, and to venture to another place of anchoring; to make the mental self-surrender and do the work of mental readjusting that must follow; to come deliberately and intelligently to the decision that means the sacrifice of everything one has—these are some of the difficulties that earnest and thoughtful men have to meet in the dawning of new eras for mankind: and thus, naturally enough, many good people are slow to see the signs of the coming kingdom; slow to join its leaders; slow to enter into the new movement when it does appear. But the selfish and formal and pharisaic elements in religious society are not so slow. They do not require a long time to deliberate; with them the case is simpler; all they have to do is to hold their own; and they see AT ONCE wherein the new agitation and the new movement

clashes with their pleasures, or their interests, or their pride. It arouses AT ONCE their hatred and contempt. They are ready AT ONCE to fight it with misrepresentation, or vituperation, or any other means at their command; and they range themselves together AT ONCE upon the opposite side. The messengers of the new era always excite the antipathy and the resistance of the selfish and perverse more quickly than they call forth the sympathy and co-operation of the good. And all of the meaning of the foregoing lengthy paragraphs has been condensed by our Lord into these brief lines: "At the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers GATHER YE TOGETHER FIRST THE TARES." The words which follow are "but gather the wheat into my barn"; and the meaning of this statement is substantially the same as that of the words in Matt. xxiv:31 "He shall send forth His messengers . . . and shall gather together His elect from the four winds from one end of heaven to the other." We have explained this in the Chapter on "Misleading Translations and Erroneous Views."

And here we may remark again how evident and natural is this explanation of the words "gather ye together first the tares"! How clearly the true explanation of the parable has unfolded so far as an illustration of what takes place in human history and in human life! and yet the Premillennialist interpreter will refer this parable to the coming of Christ and of the angels at the time of the resurrection of the dead. They assert that Jesus says "the hour cometh in which all that are in their graves shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation," or condemnation. But the resurrection of the good is mentioned first, and these Premillennialist teachers assume that this indicates that the good will be raised first. And Rev.

xx:4-5 speaks of the first resurrection, and the context proves that the reference is to the martyred dead who "had been beheaded for the witness of Jesus" and "who had not worshipped the beast nor received his mark." And Premillennialist teachers again assume that these shall be rewarded before the wicked shall be raised; and in his glorious fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians, Paul is speaking throughout of those who have died in Christ, and says "Every man in his own order, Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His Coming" (1 Cor. xv:23). And elsewhere Paul positively states that "*The dead in Christ shall rise first.*" which cannot mean anything else than that the saints shall be gathered first. And 1 Thess. iv:17 clearly proves that this was Paul's view when he wrote these words. But we repeat Jesus says "GATHER YE TOGETHER FIRST THE TARES," and thus a flat contradiction becomes evident at once. We cannot assume that the saints shall be gathered first and caught up together in the clouds, and at the same time believe that "the tares" shall be gathered first. So that if Paul's view is right that the dead in Christ shall rise first—and of course Premillennialists emphatically insist that he is right—then their interpretation of the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares must be wrong. The words "gather ye together first the tares" is fatal to their view.

And the messengers "shall gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend," or all things that are an occasion of stumbling or offence (Matt. xiii:41). For instance, in the time of Paul the rite of circumcision was an occasion of stumbling to Christians of the Jewish race. For centuries it had been practised among them; for centuries it had been their peculiar mark of separation; and peoples without this mark had been referred to with disdain, as when David

speaks of Goliath as "this uncircumcised Philistine" (1 Sam. xvii:26). But when Paul taught that "in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature" (Gal. vi:15); and "circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit and not of the letter" (Rom. ii:29), the Jewish Christians stumbled, or were offended, over the abolition of the ancient rite. And in the early and middle portions of the nineteenth century the Negro slavery system was an occasion of stumbling to a large number of American Christians. The system had been in existence for ages. Even the Apostle Paul had not pronounced in favor of the abolition of it in his day: he only sought to mitigate the evils of it by teaching slaves to be obedient to their own masters, rendering service with all good will as unto Christ; "and ye masters do the same things unto them forbearing threatening," etc. (Ephes. vi:5-9). And good men like Jonathan Edwards, whose preaching had led many to a better life; and Patrick Henry, who had spoken with electrifying eloquence for liberty for the whites—were themselves slave-owners, and saw nothing essentially wrong in owning slaves. "The time of this ignorance God winked at" (Acts xvii:30). But when God's time for the abolition of slavery was drawing near He sent forth His messengers William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, Henry Ward Beecher, Charles Sumner, etc., to call all men everywhere in the nation to repent. In other words, He sent them forth to "remove out of His Kingdom" this slavery system that was the occasion of stumbling and offence. And these messengers continued denouncing and appealing till their work culminated in the great civil war; and this war completed the separation; it removed that form of slavery from the nation forever. And the time came when the abolition of circumcision in the church was due, and He sent forth His

messengers Paul and Barnabas and Timothy and Silas and others to remove this cause of stumbling; and their work and its effects continued till Jerusalem was utterly destroyed, and the church was freed from circumcision and other traditions of the Jewish race.

But the tares refer especially to them that do iniquity—to “the children of the wicked one.” It does not refer to the ordinary criminal or the ordinary slave of vice, but to those who stand for inequality—who take a stand against the cause of social justice—who resist a movement whose object is to bring the unprivileged and neglected to their rightful social or religious heritage; and who take this stand, or resist this movement, because their pride is pampered or shielded, or because their interests or their wrong-doing is protected, by the existing order of things. And our Lord states that at the time of the harvest the reapers are to bind the tares together in bundles to burn them; and He explains this by saying that at the end of the age the messengers shall cast the workers of iniquity into “a furnace of fire.” As we have already seen, there are some parts in almost every parable that are not to be pressed into unwarranted or unintended uses. Thus it says that the tares are to be burned, which literally would mean that they are to be annihilated or destroyed. But our Lord’s teachings elsewhere do not warrant us in believing that the wicked are to be annihilated or utterly destroyed in the end of each particular age. The burning is no discipline or punishment to the literal tares, and so at this particular point the parallel between the parable and the actual truths is not entirely complete, or at least is liable to a very unwarranted inference or misuse. In the Scriptures “fire” often signifies the process of testing and purification by which human character is tried, and its baser or undesirable elements are purged

away (see 1 Peter i:7); and the common sorrows, disappointments and afflictions, the annoyances or losses or adversities that we meet in ordinary times are the means by which this testing and purification is brought about. But the ordinary course of things does not test people in general severely enough. It does not prove them thoroughly. It does not stir up all of the evil that is latent in formally religious people. But these times of special Divine visitation do. They cast men "into a furnace of fire," (compare Malachi iii:1-3)—which means that they put them into *intensified conditions of trial* that develop and bring into full relief qualities and characteristics that were hitherto unsuspected and unknown. At such times for instance the man who hid his talent in the earth, the man who had appeared in a way to be on the side of religion and of right, is forced into the light. All the while he has been living a life of selfish policy and prudence, perhaps without being fully conscious of it, or without understanding it himself; but now he stands detected and exposed to view. In the earlier stages of the moral crusade, when it was kept in the background more or less, he was afraid to show his sympathy, and he kept himself on the side of reaction and delay; but now the real truth comes out, and he has to admit, "I was afraid and went and hid thy talent in the earth"; because "I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou had'st not sown and gathering where thou hadst not strawed," or scattered. The lot of a moral crusader or preacher of reformation is usually a hard lot, as John Knox proved when he toiled nineteen months as a galley slave as a penalty for preaching the doctrines of the Reformation: as William Lloyd Garrison proved when he was dragged by a mob through the streets of Boston for teaching that the Negro had a right to freedom; and as

many another faithful man has proved in a less conspicuous way. God's Providence permits it; human probation proceeds on these conditions; human merit or demerit is proved or disproved in this way; and those who are destined to become most useful are put to the severest tests. So this time-serving man says "I knew thee that thou art a hard man and I was afraid," "I was afraid that my reputation would suffer, and that I might be considered erratic or peculiar if I should show sympathy with this kind of religion. I was afraid my interests would be affected and that I should have to suffer boycott, or reduction of salary. I was afraid that my position in society or in the church would be affected if I should stand in with this new cause; so I waited to see what turn things were going to take before I decided in which direction I would move. Meanwhile my talent of religious capacity has not developed." "I have hid thy talent in the earth" or "have kept it laid up in a napkin, lo there thou hast thine own." (See Matt. xxv:24-25, and Luke xix:20.) The foregoing truths have been expressed with great force and beauty by the distinguished American poet in the poem from which we have already given a verse or two.

"Then to side with truth is noble
When we share her wretched crust;
Ere her cause bring fame and profit
And 'tis prosperous to be just;
Then it is the brave man chooses
While the coward turns aside,
Doubting in his abject spirit,
Till his Lord is crucified."

Once in a while there may be a man whose moral nature is as yet not entirely withered—who has a little religious capacity left. It is possible that with the little that remains

he may avail himself of the opportunity to repent and be a man; for "all things are possible with God." But the parable illustrates the case of one among many who do not repent; in whom self-interest is the influence that sways; who resist the appeals of truth and right till they lose what love of truth and right they ever had—and in their case the words of the poet are verified,—

"Light obeyed increased light,
Light resisted bringeth night,
Who shall give me power to choose
If the love of light I lose?"

In such a case Inexorable Justice, in the words of the parable, says "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness": in other words deliver him over to a state of incurable blindness in regard to spiritual things; to a state like that of the Pharisees of old. Put him outside of the number of

"Those with heart and vision gifted
To discern and love the right."

Consign him to the night which is preliminary to the darkness of the world of woe. Life's great privilege neglected, life's great opportunity gone, all that was intended in human probation missed, through selfish, sordid, craven fear, What follows then? "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

"Weeping and gnashing of teeth!" This terrible and suggestive phrase occurs five times in the Gospel according to Matthew and once in the Gospel according to Luke. At the close of the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares (Matt. xiii:42 R.V.), and of the parable of the dragnet which brought all kinds of fish to the beach (Matt. xiii:50), and of the parable of the unfaithful servant who is caught beat-

ing his fellow servants or eating and drinking with the drunken when his lord suddenly returns (Matt. xxiv:48-51), we hear the solemn dirge which suggests the funeral of a lost soul. "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." But these words contain a great meaning which, under the old interpretation, has been almost, if not completely, overlooked. They do not refer *primarily* to future punishment as has commonly been supposed. They refer to that intensity of emotion that is produced when the great truths of the Spiritual Kingdom are first proclaimed in each new period or new age. When Peter preached his great sermon on the day of Pentecost, multitudes of the people were profoundly stirred, and with great earnestness exclaimed "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts ii:37). They were stirred with emotions of penitence and grief. "Near the close of the sixteenth century, under the ministry of such divines as Wishart, Cooper, and Welsh"—worthy successors of John Knox—"all Scotland was visited by an extraordinary outpouring of the Holy Spirit. So mightily were men affected that the whole General Assembly, four hundred ministers and elders, while renewing their solemn league and covenant with groans and tears, were swayed by the Spirit as the leaves of the forest are swayed by a mighty rushing wind." And in the great religious awakening that occurred under the preaching of George Whitefield and the Wesleys in the eighteenth century, the weeping and the sobbing and the crying of penitent individuals confessing their sins was no uncommon thing. Thus there is "weeping" when the Spiritual Kingdom appears in the new time. In other cases the preaching of the message of new Divine visitation produces entirely different effects. In men of the perverse, hardened, and hypocritical type, it excites the most intense manifestations

of bitterness and hate and rage. It did so when it caused the Jews to "gnash" on Stephen the first martyr "with their teeth." And for a modern illustration, we can give nothing better than the following extract from the address which Archdeacon Farrar, one of the most scholarly and most honored of the ministers of the Church of England, gave on the occasion of the centennial celebration of John Wesley's death.

"It was not, therefore, astonishing that both the world and the Church met the beginnings of Wesleyanism with fierce repugnance. The world expressed its hatred by riotous fury and endless abuse. Turbulent mobs, often headed by gentlemen and sometimes by clergymen, surrounded and stormed the meeting-places, and not only threatened, but actually used personal violence against the preachers and their adherents. They were frequently pelted with stones and beaten with sticks; and on two occasions a baited bull, set on by dogs and dog-like men, was driven into the midst of their congregation. . . . Wesley was called an old fox, a notorious hypocrite, an avaricious self-seeker, a Jesuit, a Pope, a traitorous Jacobite and conspirator; as for Whitefield, he

"'Stood pilloried on infamy's high stage
And bore the pelting scorn of half an age,
The very butt of slander, and the blot
For every dart that malice ever shot.
The man that mentioned him, at once dismissed
All mercy from his lips, and sneered and hissed;
His crimes were such as Sodom never knew,
And Perjury stood up to swear all true;
His aim was mischief, and his zeal pretence,
His speech rebellion against common sense;
A knave, when tried on honesty's plain rule,
And when by that of reason, a mere fool;
The world's best comfort was, his doom was passed,
Die where he might, he must be damned at last!'"

The foregoing paragraphs are a literal and more expanded way of saying that "they gnashed" on Wesley and Whitefield "with their teeth."

But let us turn to the passage in which these words occur in Luke. "When once the Master of the House is risen, and hath shut the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door saying, Lord open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are; then shall ye begin to say, we have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But He shall say I tell you I know you not whence ye are; depart from me all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth when ye shall see Abraham and Isaac, and Jacob and all of the prophets in the Kingdom of God and ye yourselves thrust out" (Luke xiii:25-28); and Matthew says "they shall come from the East and from the West, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven. But the children of the Kingdom shall be cast into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matt. viii:11-12). These passages carry our minds convincingly to a sphere of retribution that is beyond the present life. In explaining the Parable of the Ten Virgins, and the Parable of the Marriage Feast, we noticed that the feast refers to the satisfaction and the spiritual joys which the truths of the gospel bring to hungry, neglected souls; and we noticed further, that this satisfaction and these joys will be consummated and perpetuated in a higher sphere, in what John calls "The Marriage Supper of the Lamb." Just so it appears that these words "weeping and gnashing of teeth" will have a more complete fulfilment in another state, that may express something of the climax of woe and horror in the future condition of the lost; the weeping referring, perhaps, to the anguish and remorse of those who are continually thinking of "what might have been," and "the gnashing of teeth" to those who are continually cursing

their Maker and rebelling against their fate. The one thinking, like the rich man in Hades, of others who might be warned if they only knew (Luke xvi:27-28); and the others blaspheming the God of Heaven because of their pains, and still repenting not of their misdeeds (Rev. xvi:11).

And so in closing this part of our exposition, we may say that instead of referring to some great, ultra-natural, "far off divine event" in His teachings about His coming again, our Lord has been stating some of the laws of universal history; and giving some illustrations and some warnings from the same. Instead of giving us the conception of a transcendent God who comes to the earth at the end of time, in sublime and glorious manifestation, out of a far off celestial sphere, He gives us the conception of an all-seeing, judicial and beneficent God who is everywhere present, and is forever immanent in human affairs. Instead of the spectacular scenes and the awful sentences of an ultimate day of Judgment, and of innumerable multitudes upon multitudes of human beings from every nation, and language, and race, and age, before a literal judgment throne, He is speaking of days of Judgment that take place in human life and human history; and instead of saying that "the angels will gather the harvest bye and bye," He implies that the messengers sent by Providence gather the harvest in the present sphere; instead of an archangel's trumpet dividing society, these human messengers divide society. Their message brings into relief men's real character, and character determines the allotments of felicity or of doom in the world beyond the grave. And thus we realize more fully than under the old interpretation that God is directing things in this present world. He is working ceaselessly in what we call the natural course of events, and our present human life is replete with the divine.

And we hold further, that the foregoing interpretations are not mere theorizing or supposition. They are demonstrations, and in their main outlines they are unanswerable, even if they leave unanswered some questions about the future state. But that is no valid objection. The most perfect exposition would have to leave some of such questions in the dark. But our argument stands thus: On the one hand, our Lord, in His teachings IN MATTHEW, MARK AND LUKE about His coming again, taught that under certain conditions certain things would inevitably take place. On the other hand, here are the facts of history showing that these things have taken place. The lines of His teaching and the lines of history are parallel. They exactly correspond. Therefore, our Lord's words are true, and the facts of history that we have set forth are the demonstration of their truth. And our Lord's meanings, thus seen in the light of history and of facts, lift the supreme things of religion and of life up into their proper place. He says nothing about any church organization, or "historic episcopacy," or mode of baptism, or about an authoritative statement of a creed. We have His words as statements of the laws of the spiritual life, and that ought to be enough for us. Those things about which theologians and churches have disputed and wrangled for centuries, are either not mentioned at all, or are left in a subordinate place; and life, spiritual and eternal, and communion with the Father, and purity of heart, and love of our fellowmen manifesting itself in uprightness and charity and patience and helpfulness, are exalted into the supreme place; and this spiritual life and communion, and this true human love, may be found in different organizations of Christian people, Roman Catholic, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Unitarian, etc.; or it may be found outside of any church

organization whatever; and such a people, having such a life and such a love, belong to the true Church of Christ. These are the unmistakable conclusions to be drawn from His teachings on this great theme.

CHAPTER IX.

PAUL'S VIEW OF A SPEEDY COMING.

IN the earlier chapters of this book we noted that Paul and the early Christians expected the coming of Christ in their own day. We quoted Paul's words in 1 Thess. iv:15 "*We* that are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord"; and we might have quoted his words in 1 Cor. xv:52: "*We* shall not all sleep but *we* shall be changed, in a moment in the twinkling of an eye,"* etc. We laid emphasis on the "WE" to prove that Paul at the time of writing expected to be in the number of those who would see Christ's coming in the literal clouds. And we noticed that those early Christians expected Him to appear in a glorified body and in visible splendor, to raise the sainted dead, and to carry them and the saintly living, into the upper sphere. But such a coming of Christ, and such a world catastrophe as they expected never came to pass. Hence Paul and his fellow-disciples could not have clearly and fully seen the meaning of Christ's teachings; at that time they could not have understood them as illustrations of laws of universal history. What other conclusion can we reach? And yet we can imagine the protest which this statement is likely to raise. It will be said that we are "undermining the Scriptures," that we are teaching that "the Apostles are unreliable men," that we are guilty of "a dangerous attack upon the foundations of faith." But this protest is only a scarecrow raised, not to save the Scriptures, but to save the erroneous theory of inspiration on which it is based. In his early days Henry Ward Beecher was over-optimistic,

* See Weiss's "Biblical Theology of the New Testament," Vol. II., p. 64.

and in one of his hopeful, happy moods he predicted that there would never be another great war. He thought that the nations were becoming too enlightened, too civilized, and too humane for war. But in his old age he stated that since making that prediction several of the bloodiest wars of history had taken place. Does this mistake prove the general unreliability of Beecher? Or does it in any way affect the value of his glorious sermons on the Fatherhood of God? We reckon not. And if Paul was mistaken as to the time of the resurrection, and as to the manner of Christ's coming in his own age, does the mistake in any way affect the value of his teachings on the divinity of Christ, or on the spiritual life? Does it affect our estimate of his beautiful teachings on Christian duty and Christian love in Romans xii and 1 Cor. xiii? We reckon it does not. It is well known that the late William E. Gladstone, the eminent statesman and scholar, was very fond of theological studies, and that he had a very decided leaning toward conservative or traditional views. Yet in the concluding chapter of his work on "The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture," he refers to "a semblance" of contradiction between modern science and Paul's statement in Romans v:12 that the entrance of sin brought death into our world; and he adds, "suppose that in this verse Paul really did refer to physical death"—which is very doubtful indeed—"How much would this prove? Only that the Apostle was ignorant of any pre-Adamic history of the planet; and that we should have to ask whether such ignorance, when proved, would destroy or impair the overflowing proofs that he was commissioned of God to speak, and was taught of God how to speak, for the salvation of the world."

It may be asked, could not God so inspire men that their teachings would be absolutely free from error in regard to

science and history and dates, and in regard to any other matters not essential to salvation or to present needs? And we reply that we do not say that He could not; but when we desire to learn whether He actually did so inspire them or not, we have to go to the Holy Scriptures in order to find out. This is what we teach: Accept and abide by what the Scriptures prove. At whatever cost be loyal to the truth which they contain, and be not afraid of any result which the most thorough and scientific examination may bring to light. The protests and objections referred to proceed on the assumption that inspiration implies infallibility, that it secures perfect freedom from all error even in minor matters, and that the apostles were infallible men because they were inspired men; but the Bible is the very book that proves that they were not infallible men. See Gal. ii:11-14 as one proof of this; the Bible gives many other proofs; and the Bible shows that God reveals Himself and reveals His truth to men gradually, or in part, not through any lack of generosity, not through any unwillingness to reveal everything at once, but because men in general are not capable of receiving more than a little at a time. The limitations of the human mind, the limitations of even the greatest minds, and the laws of mental and spiritual growth are such, that it is only little by little that men can apprehend and understand the things to be revealed; and these must be of a very elementary nature in the earlier stages of the learner's growth. Even the aptest disciples seem to be slow of faith, as we shall show by giving a few Scripture illustrations of the fact.

Samuel, for example, was a great prophet and statesman who appeared at an important stage in the history of the Israelitish people. The early chapters of the First Book of Samuel tell us of a wonderful revelation, which he received

in early life, of calamity impending over that people, and over the house of Eli the High Priest; and they relate how the revelation was completely fulfilled in an invasion by the Philistines, in a terrible slaughter in the Israelitish army—Hophni and Phinehas, sons of Eli, being among the slain—and the Ark of God, the symbol of His Presence, being carried away into an alien land. The same scriptures give indications of Samuel's growing influence, of his organizing genius, of his drawing the tribes together and laying the foundation of the nation's future greatness by the moral reformation which he brought about. But after Saul had been chosen king, Samuel receives an impression, which, Oriental like, he takes as from the Lord, and which he regards as a "thus saith the Lord"; and his impression is that he must go to King Saul and command him to go and utterly exterminate the Amalekites; slaughter them all, men, women, children, infants; and not only innocent children and infants, but innocent cattle and sheep as well. And for what? Why, for an offence against the Israelitish people which the ancestors of these Amalekites had been guilty of about four hundred years before. (See 1 Sam. xv:1-5.) We admit there was another reason for this massacre, a reason that was much nearer than the ancient curse. (See Exodus xvii:8 and 14, and Deut. xxv:17-19.) These Amalekites were invaders and robbers of the cultivated lands in the south, and murderers of those Israelites who defended their own homes. But it was the ancient curse and not the recent provocations that is given as the reason for the command to exterminate the Amalekitish race. And all of this goes to show that Samuel, although a prophet, and therefore inspired in a degree, had not yet outgrown those old sentiments, and that old law of blood revenge, which prevailed in those days, which was expressed

in the words, "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," and which our Lord expressly abolished in a later time, because it was out of harmony with a complete revelation of God, and of His law of love.

But let us turn to two or three New Testament illustrations. When Jesus of Nazareth was only a new, though startling appearance among men; before history had given Him His proper place; when He was greatly disturbing the existing order of things; when the verdict of priests and Pharisees was against Him, and the world's wise men were in doubt about His work; when all sorts of opinions about Him were held by the common crowd—some saying He was Elijah, and others one of the prophets, etc.; when it was no easy thing, humanly speaking, to form a correct estimate of Him—Jesus asked the disciples "but whom say ye that I am?" and Peter answered "Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God." We, who are so far after the event, can hardly appreciate the situation. It is not easy for us to understand what a wonderful answer Peter's was. Jesus was evidently delighted with it, and said it was a revelation.* (See Matt. xvi:15-17.) But the very next time Peter opened his mouth he showed how much he still had to learn and to unlearn. He showed that an earthly misconception occupied his mind along with the revelation

* On this passage Keim, a great German student, observes, "We do not know which first to designate great, whether this lofty flight of the disciples who renounce the Jewish standards, quash the verdict of the hierarchs, leap over the popular opinion which hung midway between the two extremes, find loftiness and divinity in the down-trodden and the insignificant, because, spiritually, to spiritual eyes, it remains something Divine; or, that Personality of Jesus, which compels such weak disciples, even under the paralyzing influence of all external facts, distinctly and simply and nobly to mirror back the total impression of His ministry."

he had just expressed, and Jesus had to give him a severe rebuke. He said to him "get thee behind me Satan for thou savorest not the things that are of God, but the things are of men." Again, on the day of Pentecost Peter was "filled with the Holy Ghost," and delivered an inspired sermon that exactly fitted the occasion, and brought three thousand persons into the Christian church; but he was still so bound by his Jewish views and rules that he was not ready to associate with Romans and Greeks. He was not ready even to give them the good news of salvation through Christ. The missionary idea of world-evangelization had not dawned upon his mind, and several years afterward he had to receive another revelation—that of the great sheet let down from heaven—before he felt free to go and preach to a congregation of Roman people in the home of a Roman centurion who had a reputation for being both benevolent and devout. (See Acts x.) This is enough to illustrate again how conservative toward human traditions many good men are; how they cling to age long modes of thinking; consequently, how slow they are to advance; and how gradually the revelations of divine truth have been given even to the greatest men.

Let us now consider what an experience Paul passed through. He was born and reared in a Jewish home—a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee. From his childhood he has the deepest reverence for the Levitical law and the traditions of the Jewish people. In his youth he is thoroughly indoctrinated in the particulars of their faith. At a most impressionable period of his life he goes to Jerusalem and studies under a famous doctor of the law. All of his interpretations of the Old Testament scriptures are shaped into harmony with the prevailing rabbinical views. While there he hears of the persuasive per-

sonality of Jesus of Nazareth and regards Him as a dangerous and misleading light, and views with alarm and indignation the rapid increase of His followers—the sect of the Nazarenes. On an errand of persecution against them he hears the voice of Jesus from the other sphere. He is staggered and overwhelmed by the revelation, and when he comes to himself he realizes that the followers of Jesus are right and that he has been persecuting the Messiah. He is a born thinker; a man with a great, discriminating and constructive mind; and now that these new and disturbing facts have opened up before his view he cannot rest in other men's systems or in other people's views. He comes to see larger implications in the teachings of Jesus than the Jewish Christians can see. He comes to see that Stephen's view was right; and that this Jesus of Nazareth is not merely the Messiah of the Jews but is the universal Saviour of the race; and that the Gentile races are to come into the Spiritual Kingdom, too, and that the momentous hour for which the ages have been preparing has arrived; and that he himself is the man that is called to lead the way. His old system of doctrines is shaken to the foundation, and all his old interpretations of Scriptures have to be critically revised. Issues that seem so simple and so clear to us, because they belong to a past age, were new and perplexing to him. Territory that has been explored and cleared up for us appears like a tangled and trackless forest to him. He was called to venture into regions of thought that were untried and unknown in those awful days of overwhelming revelations. He had to separate and retain the essential and eternal truths that are in the Old Testament; and he had to eliminate and leave behind that which was merely traditional and destined to pass away. All of the critical objections which his fellow-Jews would raise against his claims

and teachings would rise before his mind. With these objections ever in his view he must put the old truths and the new assured facts together, and he must construct a new and self-consistent system of his own. We can hardly realize what an immense amount of mental readjusting that man must have had to do. He was so fascinated and absorbed by what he calls "the mystery that had been hidden for ages," namely, the truth that the "Gentiles should be fellow-heirs and all of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel" (Ephes. iii:5-6, and Rom. xvi:25-26), it is no wonder that he had to go into Arabia, the land of solitude, to meditate and think, through three unrecorded years (see Gal. i:15-18); no wonder if even for years after that he was silently preparing for his future apostolic work.

And after his apostolic work was begun think of his engrossing and exhausting labors in founding churches in heathen communities; in providing overseers for them; in continuing to care for them; in facing the opposition and persecutions of the Jews; in meeting the propaganda of misleading teachers who perplexed the converts and sought to overthrow the faith; think of his homelessness; his extensive travelling, done doubtless for the most part, on foot; think of the incomplete but terrible record of suffering which he gives in 2 Cor. xii and of the other things that preoccupied his mind—and then let us ask if it is any wonder that there was some portion of Christ's inexhaustible teaching which he omitted to investigate or which he failed to understand, and which he left to the thinkers of a later age.

We wish now to inform the reader somewhat more fully in regard to contemporary Jewish thought. As we have already seen, a great deal of what is called apocalyptic litera-

ture was in circulation at the time. These apocalyptic works commonly contain a series of predictions that are put into the mouth of some conspicuous leader or prophet of a former period; and these predictions commonly extend down to the writer's own time; but on closer examination they are found to be really history, written after the event—for example, the series of predictions about the Persian, Macedonian and Roman Empires given in the Book of Daniel, chaps. vii, viii, x and xi, were not written till about the year 168 B.C.—after each of these empires had appeared, and after two of them had passed away. The apocalyptic books were written to comfort God's people in some time of tribulation or distress. The Book of Daniel, for instance, was written to encourage the Jewish people in their terrible struggle against the oppressions and cruelty of the Syrian King Antiochus Epiphanes in the years 175-164 B.C. These outlines of history set forth as predictions make us think of our own poet's (Cowper's) poem "Boadicea," about the defeat of the Ancient Britons by the invading Roman armies in the year A.D. 61. In this poem the poet makes the ancient Druid chief predict that the British race would yet use weapons of destruction then unknown; that they would in time sway more extensive dominions than the ancient Roman generals and emperors ever dreamed of.

"Then the Progeny that springs
From the forests of our land;
Armed with thunder, clad with wings,
Shall a wider world command.

"Regions Caesar never knew
Thy Posterity shall sway,
Where his eagles never flew,
None Invincible as they."

Between the years 200 B.C. and 100 A.D. large numbers of these apocalyptic works were produced and issued. Some of them were Jewish—for example, the Book of Enoch, the Book of the Secrets of Enoch, the Book of Jubilees, the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs; and some were Christian—for example, The Apocalypse of Peter and the Book of Revelation. These works are characterized by bold, and sometimes grotesque, but always very impressive, imagery; and they use terms which only the initiated would understand; but the persecuting officials of the dominant world-power would not suspect the real meaning. After the series of predictions the apocalypse culminates in a great world-conflict and catastrophe, the Advent of the Messiah, and, following that, a new era of happiness and peace. Through long centuries the Jewish people had been under the oppressors' heel, and the apocalyptic writers were terribly impressed with the arrogance and tyranny and persistence of triumphant wrong; but they did not look for deliverance in the natural course of events, they had hoped so long and wearily in vain. They did not see God's Providence in the events of the Present as the ancient Prophets did. Their outlook was pessimistic in regard to conditions in their own day. They resembled Premillennialists of our day in this respect, or rather the Premillennialists are lineal descendants of the Apocalyptic writers of ancient times. They persisted in believing in the righteous Providence of God, and they looked for the vindication of that righteousness and the deliverance of God's people. They did not expect it however, in any natural event—like the coming of Cyrus to deliver the exiles in Babylon—but in some stupendous climax of catastrophe that would utterly transcend all natural laws. The minds of the Jewish people were steeped in literature of this sort, they breathed

its atmosphere; they thought in its modes; it expressed their yearnings and their hopes; and it illustrates a common manner of thinking among the mystical and devout both of that period and of this. And the thoughts of the early Christians fell most naturally and most readily into this apocalyptic mould; they conceived of Christ's coming in this way. And when Paul wrote (1 Thess. iv:15, etc.) about Christ coming in the literal clouds, etc., he was still under the influence of these apocalyptic views; he had grown up with them from his youth and he needed a further unfolding of events before he could shed them off.

And now the reader will more readily see how gradually the revelations of divine truth were given; he will see the facts which the Scriptures themselves present in regard to this; he will see how thoroughly we are in harmony with these facts when we state that when he wrote the Epistles to the Thessalonians, Paul could not have fully understood the teachings of Christ about His coming again; and just as Samuel, although a prophet, and inspired to do a great work, had not outgrown that old law of blood-revenge; and just as Peter, although a great apostle, and inspired to preach on the day of Pentecost, had not outgrown all of his old Jewish views; so Paul, although he had received more abundant revelations, had not outgrown all those apocalyptic teachings which he had learned in his early years, and had not advanced beyond those views of Christ's coming which he found among the Jewish Christians when he first cast in his lot with theirs. Nor was it necessary to his usefulness in his own generation that he should outgrow or pass beyond those views. John Wesley has a sermon on the "Cause and Cure of Earthquakes" which contains views which the present generation has outgrown; but that sermon

did not lessen Wesley's influence with the people of his own generation. On that subject the people of his own generation were no wiser than he was. So possibly Paul had all the greater influence with the people of his own time because he did not apprehend, and therefore did not teach, the more spiritual view of Christ's coming again. On other questions he was too much advanced for many of them as it was, and he had enough of controversy with many of them, without interfering with their fondly-cherished hope that Jesus was coming soon in the literal clouds to take them all up into a better world. They found some comfort in this view, and God permitted the veil to be before their eyes (2 Cor. iii:12-16) in those earlier stages of the church's faith.

But apart from its comforting power this theory of Christ coming soon in the glorious body had another powerful hold on the minds of the early Christians. It appealed strongly, as we have seen, to that craving for the visible in worship which is deep-seated in many minds. We see this illustrated in the case of Justin Martyr, the philosopher, who became the earliest known apologist of Christianity, one of the great men of the early church, and who died a martyr in the reign of Marcus Aurelius about the year 165 A.D. He was strongly drawn to the modes of thinking, the idealism, and the culture of the Greeks, and was in favor of restating and reconstructing Christian doctrine according to Greek modes of thought and expression. Yet even he has left on record the following words: "I, and others, who are right-minded Christians in all points, are assured there will be a resurrection of the dead, and a thousand years in Jerusalem, which will then be built, adorned, enlarged, as the prophets Ezekiel, and Isaiah and others declare." We see this illustrated also in the literal-

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ism of some of Charles Wesley's hymns of which we give a specimen in the following verse :

“Wait we all in patient hope,
Till Christ, the Judge, shall come ;
We shall soon be all caught up
To meet the general doom ;
In an hour to us unknown,
As a thief in deepest night,
Christ shall suddenly come down
With all the saints in light.”

And we see this propensity still further illustrated in the tenacity with which the premillennial view still holds ground in many pious people to-day after all of the records of disappointment to premillennial dreams which so many generations of history have brought. Verily Paul had opposition enough without contending with the attractive influence which the prevailing theory had. His own generation did not lose much through the fact that Paul did not thoroughly explore or fully understand Christ's teaching on this subject. His own generation was not prepared for the more spiritual view.

But Paul says in 1 Thess. iv :15 “*This I say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord,*” etc. He evidently thought that he had a “thus saith the Lord” to support his views, but we should like to suggest an explanation of this assurance of Paul's. We think our explanation will help to illustrate still further how he and contemporary Christians came to hold such views. Let us again turn to the teachings of Jesus as given in Matt. xxiv :29-31 and Matt. xiii :41-43, and the teachings of Paul as given in 1 Thess. iv :15-17 and 2 Thess. i :6-10. Let us place these two in parallel columns ;

let us compare them verse by verse, and see what conclusion becomes apparent at once.

"29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

"30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

"31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

—Matt. xxiv :29-31.

"41 The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity,

"42 And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth [R.V.].

"15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

"16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

"17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

—1 Thess. iv :15-17.

"6 Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;

"7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,

"8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

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"43 Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."

—Matt. xiii:41-43.

"9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power.

"10 When he shall come to be glorified in his saints and to be admired in all them that believe."

—2 Thess. i:6-10.

Now will the reader note the parallel statements in the above columns. Matt. xxiv:30 says "They shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Paul says "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout," etc.

Matt. xxiv:31 says "He shall send His messengers with a great sound of a trumpet and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds of heaven." Paul speaks of the "voice of the archangel and the trump of God," and of the "elect being caught up together in the clouds."

Matt. xiii:41-42 speaks of "the Son of Man sending His messengers to gather out of His Kingdom all things that cause stumbling or offence, and them that do iniquity," and he speaks of "casting them into a furnace of fire in which there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Paul says "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the voice of Our Lord Jesus Christ," etc.

Is it not a very reasonable assumption that Paul has taken Matthew's highly figurative statements as though they were literal speech? And his apocalyptic views would make this the most natural and most probable interpretation to him. We have seen that the original word for "angels" may mean either celestial messengers or human messengers. Our

Lord, in Matt. xxiv:31 and xiii:41-42, meant human messengers; but is it not clear that Paul has understood these verses as if our Lord had meant celestial messengers? And that Paul's early belief in the apocalyptic literature referred to would naturally incline him to interpret Matt. xxiv:29-31 and Matt. xiii:41-42 in this literal way? Critical students teach that Matthew's Gospel was not put into its present form till after Paul wrote to the Thessalonians; but no doubt the above passages from Matthew were in circulation as oral tradition among the early Christians long before Paul wrote; no doubt he understood them in the same way as the early Christians did. And beside we are assured by one of the earliest of the fathers, whose name was Papias, that Matthew had prepared a book of "logia," or discourses by our Lord, and that this book, though now lost to us, was the source of the great discourses which Matthew's Gospel contains. It is quite possible that Paul had known of these discourses even before he was convinced that Jesus was the Christ.

The passage in Matt. xxiv:29-31 is an apocalyptic passage. It is in the style of much of the literature of that day. It contains terms which only the initiated would understand. It is like the Book of Revelation. The writer of that book speaks of "Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots" (Rev. xvii:5, etc.). He speaks "of the great dragon with seven heads and ten horns" (Rev. xii:3); and "of the woman who fled into the wilderness, to whom was given the wings of a great eagle" (Rev. xii:14, etc.). The persecuted Christians would recognize that Babylon meant Rome; that the great dragon meant the Roman power; that the seven heads alluded to the seven hills on which Rome was built; and the ten horns meant ten kings; and that the woman fleeing into the wilderness meant the church. But the Roman officials

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would not see these meanings. To them Revelation was a sealed book. So we may say of Matt. xxiv:29-31 and the Christians of Paul's day. To them its meanings were sealed. They were somewhat like "the mystery that had been hid for ages" that Paul speaks of in Ephesians and elsewhere. But the meanings, sealed at the time, were latent in that passage, just as "the mystery" that Paul speaks of was latent in parts of Isaiah, Amos and Hosea.

And here we pause a moment in wonder at the methods of Jesus as a teacher; at His insight into the greatest subjects, and into men's ability, or lack of ability, to comprehend; and at His wisdom in presenting difficult truths to unprepared minds. Paul, referring to the Divine plan for the redemption of mankind exclaimed, "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" (Rom. ii:33). So we would exclaim, O marvellous teachings of Jesus about His coming again! He knew that the generations immediately following His time would not be prepared to see the deeper and the more spiritual view, and it would not have been best to give it to them in literal speech; so He has left it in parables and symbols that conceal His meaning and yet reveal it; that conceal it from those who were not prepared to receive it; and conserve it, in order to reveal it to disciples of later times. He knew that the parables and symbols would some day be interpreted, and that the real meaning would yet be brought to light. He has declared that "there is nothing hid that shall not be manifested," "nothing kept secret that shall not come abroad" (Mark iv:20-21). He knew that with the lessons of history later generations would be in a better position to discern and understand.

And we need to-day to come back to the teachings of Christ upon this subject. The churches of the Reformation

period, and the churches of the Puritan period as well, were greatly drawn to Paul. This was because of the fullness of his teaching on the doctrine of Justification by Faith, which was one of the great subjects of controversy in those days. The fact is, the Protestant theologians were drawn to the teachings of Paul more than to the teachings of Christ Himself. And the result was not good. They were brought into endless disputation and wrangling; they engendered intense bitterness among themselves by following Paul so closely and so fully on such great subjects as divine sovereignty, foreknowledge, and predestination, and the relation of these to the freedom of the will. Paul had great analytical powers of mind and his expanded discussion of these subjects led into unfathomable depths of thought; yet Protestant theologians divided over his teachings of these subjects, and made the acceptance of their particular views a condition of entrance into the churches which they led. If they had left Paul's views on these questions in the background; if they had noticed how little Christ discussed them; and had given more attention to His teachings about the Spiritual Kingdom—the results would have been better than they were.

In a similar way to-day, many pious, well-meaning people appear to be drawn to Paul's teachings more than they are drawn to Christ's. They quote Paul more than they quote Christ. They are continually referring to Paul's views in 1 Thess. iv :15-19 about the saints being caught up together in the natural clouds, etc. And they give little exposition of the teachings of Christ. They have no explanations of the Parables of the Ten Virgins and the Wheat and the Tares, etc. Let the reader look into books by Premillennialist writers and see. They still cling to the mistaken views of the early church that have been disproved by the events; and thus they fail to understand the view of the Supreme

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Teacher and Spiritual Guide; and Christian people in general are confused as a result.

After Paul wrote his earliest epistles time glided on, changes came and went, but the world-catastrophe and spectacular coming of Christ described in the Epistles to the Thessalonians did not come to pass; and what he first regarded as signs failed to culminate, and Paul appears to have outgrown or shed off the influence of the earlier Apocalyptic views. This is evident when we contrast the Epistles to the Thessalonians with the Epistle to the Ephesians.

The differences between the two epistles illustrates the doctrine of revelation. They show how, through the experiences of life, and through open-minded observation of facts, even inspired men become prepared for still larger visions and larger revealings from God. The Epistle to the Ephesians gives evidence of recent spiritual upliftings and richer illuminations received by the apostle while he was a prisoner in Rome. In this epistle he gives quite a different view from that which he gives in 1 Thess. iv:15-19, and we must frame our doctrine of inspiration in harmony with this fact. He still believed in that glorious consummation of human history which he describes in 1 Cor. xv:24-27, when the reign of Christ shall have become absolute and supreme, and every opposing force shall have been "brought into subjection" and "put under His feet," and "the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." He still believed in the ultimate and resplendent manifestation of Christ in the glorified spiritual body, for he says in Philippians "Our citizenship is in heaven from whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ who shall change the body of our humiliation that it may be fashioned like unto the body of His glory" (Phil. iii:20-21 R.V.). But he came to realize that the final coming or manifestation, commonly called the Second

Coming of Christ, might be milleniums away; for in the Epistle to the Romans (chap. xi) he speaks of the conversion of the Jews and implies that it was yet to come in the dim and distant future: and he refers to the uplifting which the church would receive when their conversion would take place. "For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" (Rom. xi:15). And in the Epistle to the Ephesians he speaks of the purpose of God "that in the ages to come"—not in the near future—"He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." And in chap. i he refers to "the dispensation of the fulness of time" in which the Divine Being, by the methods of His Providence and grace, would bring all things in heaven and earth into harmony with His plan, and He who once trod our earth as Jesus of Nazareth in the days of His humiliation would become the central object of devotion to a united and adoring universe of men. (See Ephes. i:9 and ii:23; also Phil. ii:5-11.) And in that assurance he rested and awaited the end of life's labor and looked for its reward. His experience recalls the pregnant lines of Robert Browning in "Rabbi Ben Ezra":

"For more is not reserved
To man, with soul just nerved
To act to-morrow what he learns to-day;
Here, work enough to watch
The Master work, and catch
Hints of the proper craft, tricks of the tool's true play.

"As it was better, youth
Should strive, through acts uncouth,
Toward making, than repose in aught found made:
So, better, age, exempt
From strife, should know than tempt
Further. Thou waitedest age: wait death nor be afraid."

CHAPTER X. .

CRITICISM AND PREMILLENNIAL VIEWS.

WHEN we speak of critics and criticism some sort of fault-finding or adverse judgment is usually implied; thus when we hear that a certain public speaker has been criticised we understand that some fault has been found with his manner, or his spirit, or with the substance of his discourse. But criticism as applied to the Scriptures usually means something else; it means an exercise of our reason or our judgment in regard to them: to express this more fully, criticism of any book or any passage of Scripture means a careful, candid examination of its contents with a view of ascertaining from internal evidence who was the author of it; in what surroundings did he live; what moral or social conditions prevailed; what religious views were generally held in his day; what was his point of view; what was his purpose or motive in preparing or writing the book or the passage in question; what is the true interpretation of it, in view of the answers obtained; and what is the meaning or importance of the book or passage to us.

The most superficial examination of the Scriptures will show us that we must criticise, or exercise our reason when we read them. If we do not we shall be led into all sorts of confusion, or into all sorts of narrow or one-sided views. Let us give an interesting illustration. The prophet Micah speaking of a day when war shall be no more says "And He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. And they shall sit every man under his fig tree; and

none shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it" (Micah iv:3-4). And the Prophet Joel says "Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say I am strong" (Joel iii:9-10). At first sight these passages appear to disagree or to contradict each other outright. Each seems to breathe a different spirit. Again, Jesus discouraged any resort to physical force in asserting personal rights (Matt. xxvi:52), "Then Jesus said unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." But according to Luke, "Then said he unto them, But now he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one" (Luke xxii:.6). It is evident that we must exercise our reason or our critical faculty here. We have to give these passages and the context a critical examination. We must do this in order to learn under what different circumstances they were spoken or written or what particular object the writers or speakers had immediately in view. We must account for such different statements in persons who are supposed to be in essential harmony with one another.

We have made the foregoing remarks on criticism for a particular reason. Some critics have greatly minimized the divine element in the Scriptures; some of them deny any special divine element altogether. Their critical faculty has carried them too far. But there is another extreme. There are some earnest Christian people who reject the application of criticism to the Scriptures altogether; they ignore all facts newly brought to light by scientific investigation in regard to the literary origin of certain books of the Bible.

"They repudiate all efforts at rethinking the Christian faith, and prefer a bald literalism in the treatment of the Scriptures. The theological teaching, if such it may be called, of the various Bible Institutes that have grown up in Chicago, Minneapolis, Los Angeles, and other cities, is frankly opposed to anything like critical thought."* Some of the latter class of extremists even condemn as sceptics all Christian men who examine the newly discovered facts with an open mind. Russell's doctrine of the Millennial Dawn is one natural and logical outcome of this closing of the mind to undeniable facts. In this chapter we shall give some other illustrations from writers who hold premillennial views.

Many interpreters of prophecy are like the teachers who hold the new doctrine about a "millennial dawn." They make a large use of the Book of Daniel. They draw great inferences from "the time, times and a half" of chap. xii:7, and from "the seventy weeks" of chap. ix:24, and from the 1,290 days of chap. xii:11 and the 1,335 days of chap. xii:12. "The seventy weeks" equals 490 days, so they assume; and they assume that a day means a year; and the 490 days, therefore, means 490 years; and these 290 years indicate how many years would pass between the time of Daniel and the time when the Christ would come. And by curious uses of the 1,290 days, they think they can calculate pretty nearly when the end of the world will be. We have given an example of that kind of figuring in Chapter II. But modern criticism has overthrown the old theory of the origin of the Book of Daniel and upset all such calculations as the above. It shows to what class of literature this Book of Daniel belongs, and from internal

* From an article by Shailer Mathews, on "The Awakening of American Protestantism," from *The Constructive Quarterly*, Vol. I., No. 1.

evidence it proves that the book was produced more than 300 years later than was formerly supposed. Professor Delitzsch,* a devout and conservative critic, was forced to conclude that it was not written till about the year 168 B.C. He admitted this in the last book which he produced before his death. The Book of Daniel was written to encourage the Jews when they were suffering cruel oppression at the hands of a wicked Syrian king; and the seventy weeks and the 1,290 days are to be taken literally and refer to some local circumstances that are now unknown.

And the interpreters of prophecy referred to believe in a literal restoration of the land of Palestine to the Jews. We noticed this also in one of the earlier chapters of this book. They believe that the Jews will be literally gathered from every land and become a nation once more in the old homeland, and they base this view on the following passages which we request the reader to carefully review:

"Thus saith the Lord; Behold, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents, and have mercy on his dwelling places; and the city shall be builded upon her own heap, and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof. And out of them shall proceed thanksgiving and the voice of them that make merry: and I will multiply them, and they shall not be few; I will also glorify them, and they shall not be small" (Jere. xxx:18-19).

"Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; the Lord of Hosts is his name. If these ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus saith the Lord, if heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the Lord" (Jere. xxxi:35-37).

* On Professor Delitzsch see Cunningham Geikie's testimonial in the Appendix to this book. (NOTE D.)

"And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land. And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall no more be two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all. Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwelling places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God. And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I gave unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children, for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever" (Ezekiel xxxvii:21-25).

"And they shall build the old wastes, and they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations. And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen, and your vine-dressers. But ye shall be named Priests of the Lord: men shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves" (Isaiah lxi:4-6).

In considering these passages will the reader please note the following facts: First, modern criticism has restored the real meaning of prophecy and prophets. It shows that they were the great preachers of righteousness, the champions of social justice in their day; they had spiritual insight into prevailing conditions, and they had a clear view of the laws by which Providence governs nations and men. Hence they were able to see impending judgments and give warning, and they were able to see approaching deliverances and impart comfort and hope. The late Hugh Price Hughes was an intensely evangelical minister of the Wesleyan body in England, and he stated once that the restoration of the real meaning of prophets and prophecy was a vast advantage

to the church, and he considered that we are greatly indebted to criticism for this. We can see now as never before what marvellous, divinely inspired men the old Hebrew prophets really were. The critics say the appearance of Amos* "marked an epoch in the spiritual history of mankind." And in those ancient days when the people in general were ignorant, and low moral conditions prevailed and the nation was the unit, and the individual man was merged in the general mass, Jeremiah foresaw the day when evangelical religion would prevail, and the individual man would emerge, and every man would know the Lord; and even rationalistic critics marvel at the passage in which Jeremiah foretells that day (Jere. xxxi:31-34). Some of the critics go so far as to say that without Jeremiah Christianity could never have come into the world. In his own dark age Jeremiah predicted an era that was not ushered in till more than 600 years after he had passed away; and criticism throws such light on these men and their prophecies as never had been seen before. Thus criticism in devout hands has given us a more exalted view, as well as a more rational view, of the Sacred Book. It has in reality become an aid, instead of a stumbling block, to faith. Moreover, it is undermining the old Roman Catholic Church, and through the movement called Modernism, it is preparing for a Catholicism of a different type.† It is undermining the

* "Amos," says a very critical writer, "is one of the most wonderful appearances in the history of the human spirit." See George Adam Smith on the "Minor Prophets," Vol. I., p. 73.

† For illustration of the above remark about the effect of modern criticism on the Roman Catholic Church will the reader note the following statements from an encyclical letter addressed to the Church by the late Pius IX.: "We have to lament at the sight of many young men once full of promise and capable of rendering great service to the Church, now gone astray. . . And there is another sight that sad-

idolatry of the formula in Protestant churches, and is preparing for the day of broader visions, and of a larger spirit, the day when men in general will see that to possess the Spirit of Jesus is the essential thing; that His spirit of love and grace and truth may exist apart from any ecclesiastical organization, and apart from doctrinal formula; that these are adjuncts or externals of religion; and that staunch adherence to these is a very different thing from the possession of the grace of religion itself.

But these great prophets were human nevertheless. The Scriptures represent them as such. They had their limitations and the Scriptures make this clear. The great prophets already named had their rapturous visions of a future restoration of the Jewish race. They believed that this would take place after the Babylonian captivity would come to an end. But the restoration that did take place was a comparatively meagre affair. It fell immensely short of what the prophets set forth with glowing emotions and in eloquent speech. The fulfilment of their visions was further off than they at the time supposed; further off than they ever dreamed. They were like the Apostle Paul in 1 Thess. iv:15-19. As we have seen, Paul at that time was fully confident that the

dens us too: that of so many other Catholics, who, while they certainly do not go so far as the former, have yet grown into the habit, as though they had been breathing a poisoned atmosphere, of thinking and speaking and writing with a liberty that ill becomes Catholics. . . . Note here, Venerable Brethren [so Pius IX. laments], the appearance already of that most pernicious doctrine which would make the laity a factor of progress in the Church. . . . The security of the Catholic name is at stake. . . . In all Catholicism there is absolutely nothing on which it (Modernism) does not fasten. . . . What is there left in the Church which is not to be reformed according to their principles? . . . We should define it as the synthesis of all heresies. It is the sap and the substance of all errors."

deliverance of the saints was near; that Christ was coming in visible splendor soon; but nearly nineteen hundred years have passed away and He has not come yet. And these great prophets evidently believed that the restoration of the Jews to Palestine, in more than all of the old-time splendor and glory would take place soon. And it has not yet been brought about. These prophets, in their visions, really saw the Coming Day; but, that Coming Day was like a great mountain. The traveller from abroad wakes up in Mexico City in the morning, and looking south-eastward he sees Mount Popocatepetl (17,784 feet in height). He thinks he will take a little morning walk of about two miles to the mountain's base; but when he has walked two miles the mountain seems as far off as when he began. It was really forty miles away. His eyes had not deceived him at the first; there really was a mountain there, but his inference in regard to the distance was far astray. So with the prophets; they really saw the Coming Day but their inference as to the distance was not correct.

Again these predictions of glorious restoration were to be fulfilled in a manner very different from what these prophets at the time supposed. They will be fulfilled in a great spiritual restoration in one of the centuries yet to be. Paul speaks of this in impassioned language and with rapturous anticipations in Romans xi:11-36, and, quoting from Isaiah lix:20—from one of the prophets that speak about the restoration of the Jews—Paul says, “and so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written. “There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer; He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob; And this is my covenant unto them, When I shall take away sins.” (R.V.)

And elsewhere Paul says “He is not a Jew who is one out-

wardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh, but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart" (Rom. ii:28-29). Again, "they are not all Israel who are of Israel, neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children" (Rom. ix:6). "But they who are of faith the same are the children of Abraham"; and "they who are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham"; and "If ye are Christ then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. iii:7, 9, 29). These passages from Paul are enough. They prove that the glowing visions of the great prophets, visions that doubtless came when they were in a rapt and ecstatic mood, would never be fulfilled apart from some great spiritually uplifting movement, some great regenerating work of the Spirit of God. We say this because Premillennialists are expecting these visions of restoration to be fulfilled soon, and to be fulfilled in a most literal way. But they are not consistent with themselves. They carry their literalism only half way, and they adopt another mode of interpretation in the other half. We quote from an able writer who gives the substance of the following remarks:

If the promises must be taken literally, then, in the glorious time to come, "it will not be Jesus of Nazareth in His glorified body that will be king." It will not be He that will be reigning literally in Jerusalem but the real literal David will be king and will be reigning there (Jere. xxx:9). "They shall serve the Lord their God and David their king whom I will raise up unto them." And (Hosea iii:5) "afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days." "Why palter with the Scripture"? Why insist on a literal Israel and not on a literal

David? Why insist on a literal people and not on a literal person? Why say David means Jesus and deny that Israel means God's true covenant people, whether they be Gentile or whether they be Jew? If the literal interpretation be the correct one then it should be continued all the way through.

Dr. Cunningham Geikie has reviewed this subject in his "Hours with the Bible" (in Part II. of Vol. II.), and his paragraph is so luminous and convincing that we are tempted to give it in his own words; and Dr. Geikie's statements should be the more convincing to premillennial writers because of his known antipathy to modern views:

"With the confident expectation of this return of all the Twelve Tribes to their own country, and their happy reunion under one ruler, a confident belief was cherished that this King would be a descendant of their hero—David. It was necessarily taken for granted by both prophets and people, that the anointed leader, or Messiah, thus expected, would restore the kingdom on the lines of its ancient constitution, for they knew nothing higher. There might be a great advance in the religious and moral condition of the community, its glory might be immeasurably developed, and its Messiah Prince might reign in hitherto unimagined righteousness and peace; but, at its highest, the restored kingdom would only be a transfiguration of that of David. *The conception of a purely spiritual kingdom lay outside the range of human thought, and was not dreamed of till proclaimed by the lips of our Lord.* Hence the utterances of Ezekiel, like those of all his order, could picture the glories of the future only in imagery drawn from the past. It was reserved to later ages to learn their higher significance through the light shed upon them by Christ. That Jewish ideas and aspirations fill the visions of the prophets, need

not therefore surprise us, though it is essential that we realize their significance by the light of New Testament revelation. It was quite in keeping with this inevitable mode of thought that the ancient prophets had looked forward to the future glory of Israel as necessitating the return of the Ten Tribes from exile; for the idea of a spiritual Israel, distinct from the political, was beyond them. Nor was it possible for Ezekiel to think or speak except as a Jew, with the longings and expectations of his day, unconscious that his visions had a deeper meaning than he supposed."

But each new epoch of history carries humanity farther onward; and each new Spiritual visitation, is like an advancing ocean wave when the tide is coming in. It lifts men up to higher moral standards, to clearer views, and to better social and political conditions than were ever seen before; and the present world war, and the Spiritual visitation that may be expected to follow it, promises great things for the Jewish race. The capture of Jerusalem by the British forces in the latter part of 1917, after more than a thousand years of subjection to the Turk, is an epoch-marking event that has stirred the deepest emotions of the Christian world, as well as those of the Jewish race. But something else has stirred the Jewish race since that.

A most significant letter from the Hon. Arthur Balfour, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the British Government, was published in December, 1917. It was written to Lord Rothschild, the most representative man of the Jewish race, and it speaks for the whole British Cabinet of course. The following pronouncement occurs in it: "His Majesty's government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their endeavors to facilitate the achievement of

their object." And an able writer in the "Jewish Chronicle" comments thus on Mr. Balfour's letter :

"It is the perceptible lifting of the cloud of centuries; a palpable sign that the Jew—condemned for two thousand years by unparalleled wrong—is at last coming to his right. He is to be given the opportunity and means by which, in place of being a hyphenation, he can become a nation, in place of being a wanderer in every clime there is to be a home for him in his ancient land."

This assurance of the British Government looks like a beginning of a realization of the visions of the Prophets of olden days. But it is only a beginning. What further obstacles may be in the way of a Return of the Jews to their ancient land may be judged by the following extract from an article which appeared in one of our religious weeklies not long ago :

"In the first place Palestine will accommodate only some three million Jews; that is the maximum claimed by the Zionist organization. Add Syria and additional contiguous territory to Palestine, and the number of Jews that could be accommodated then is but a fraction of the 13,052,000 said to be in the world. Not even those in Eastern Europe, where they are most unwelcome—cruelly persecuted, indeed—could find refuge in the proposed Palestinian State, for fully three-quarters of the Jews of the world live in that section of the globe. In the lands out of which the ancient kingdom of Poland is to be reconstituted there are two million six hundred thousand Jews alone. The difficulties connected with the emigration of such a huge mass would be almost insurmountable, and if they could be overcome, what about the millions of Jews still abandoned to the pitifully cramped life of the Russian Pole? The creation of the new Jewish State, then, furnishes no solution of the whole Jewish question.

"Added to the above is the fact that millions of Jews would not go back to Palestine if they could. Three hundred and fifty thousand Russian Jews are now fighting for their fatherland, and many of these came back to fight for Russia, though safe in England or France. The Jew everywhere displays a passionate preference for the land of his birth. I remember a conversation I had last year in Leipzig with

a Jewish Christian teacher, a native of Russia. He had happened to say something eulogistic of Russia, and I, with ideas of that country gleaned from the novelists, remarked that it seemed strange to me that he could speak kindly of such a land. I recall little of his words that followed, but they were a revelation to me of his deep love for his native country. "It is true that the government is rotten," he ended, "but the land is a wonderful land." How his eyes lit up as he spoke! How much more heartily will he say this now that the revolution in Russia has swept the autocratic government away.*

But we proceed still further to illustrate the limitations of the prophets. As we have seen, some people insist on expecting that every prediction of theirs will be literally fulfilled, but the literal method of interpretation is disproved in some instances by the events. Some of the things which the prophets expected would soon take place have not yet taken place; but more than that, some of the things which they said would never take place actually have taken place. The prophet who wrote the words in Isaiah lxii:8-9 was speaking of conditions that would prevail after the Jews would be restored to their native land—"The Lord hath sworn by his right hand, and by the arm of his strength, Surely I will no more give thy corn to be meat for thy enemies; and the sons of the stranger shall not drink thy wine, for which thou hast labored: But they that have gathered it shall eat it, and praise the Lord; and they that have brought it together shall drink of it in the courts of my holiness" (Isaiah lxii:8-9). But the Jews were restored. Cyrus, the Persian king, delivered them from their Babylonian captivity, and sent them back to Palestine. Yet the very reverse of what the prophet predicted has actually taken place. Palestine has been invaded and pillaged and ravaged by Syrian and Roman and Mohammedan armies again and again since that time; and these alien powers have more than

* This was written before the outbreak of anarchy in Russia.

once taken possession of, or destroyed, what Jewish toilers have produced. And Jeremiah declares, in the most solemn and emphatic language that the Israelitish nation would not cease to be a nation before Jehovah forever. He avers that the sun and the moon and the stars of heaven would fail before the dissolution of the Jewish nation would take place—"Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The Lord of hosts is his name: If these ordinances depart from me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me forever" (Jere. xxxi:35-36). And yet, contrary to Jeremiah's prediction, the Jewish people ceased to be a nation nearly nineteen hundred years ago. The destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70 disorganized and scattered the Jewish people, and they have never been reorganized and united as a nation since. It is useless to reply to this by saying that "none of this ravaging or pillaging would take place after the millennial period begins, and that this is what Isaiah and Jeremiah mean." We reply that Isaiah and Jeremiah wrote from the standpoint of their own day. They saw a restoration just at hand, and they meant that never after their own times would such ravaging and pillaging of the Jewish race take place. Thus these passages are further proofs that these great prophets had their limitations, and that hitherto we have had unscriptural views of the kind of inspiration which they possessed. It is useless to cling to a theory of inspiration that is contradicted by the facts. We are out of harmony with the Holy Spirit, the very Spirit of Truth, if we do.

Thus many a misleading inference, and many an unwarranted interpretation, is based on what we call literalism,

and on the unwarranted, unscriptural theory which assumes that every word of the Bible was dictated directly to the writer by the Divine Spirit; and that he was only a passive instrument; the theory which leaves no room for the display of human characteristics, and the appearance of human limitations. Paul had to contend with the same sort of thing in his day. He was opposed in argument by unconverted Jews and by Jewish Christians, and they both claimed that they believed in the Old Testament Scriptures as well as he, and they both quoted "*the very words*" of Scripture to disprove his so-called revelations and to support their own superseded views. Their literalism was a beam in the eye, it prevented clear intellectual or spiritual vision, and it destroyed or cramped their spiritual life. This is what Paul means when he says "the letter killeth but the Spirit giveth life" (2 Cor. iii:6). We should like to give some curious modern illustrations of the same thing. In Amos v:19 that prophet says "Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! Wherefore would ye have the day of the Lord? It is darkness and not light. As if a man did flee *from a lion and a bear met him.*" Now it so occurs that the lion is the symbol of the British nation, and the bear was the symbol of the Russian empire—something of which the Prophet Amos never had the remotest dream. How should he know in his day that there would ever be a British nation or a Russian Empire, or what their respective national symbols would be? Now in 1912 A.D. the German nation was much angered against Great Britain for interfering in the Morocco affair. Germany had determined to overrule France in that affair, but Britain protested on behalf of France, and Germany yielded through fear of Britain's powerful and more numerous ships of war. But the war broke out over the Servian affair; when Austria,

backed by Germany, sent the ultimatum to Servia, Russia at once began to mobilize her armies. Thus Germany first feared and yielded to the British lion and was met afterwards by the Russian bear. Hence some literalists say that Amos predicted the present war (1914-1918). This inference from the words of Amos is too absurd to argue against. Less ridiculous things have found their way into the newspaper funny column. Yet this is literalism, carried to an extreme of course.

There is another illustration of literalism in the foolish theory that the British people are descendants of the Ten Lost Tribes. The promise was made to Abraham that his descendants should be as the stars of heaven for multitude, and that they should "possess the gates of their enemies" (Gen. xxii:17). Now it so occurs that the British nation controls some of the great highways of commerce, and some of the great straits that are invaluable in war. Britain controls the Strait of Gibraltar and commands the entrance to the Mediterranean Sea; she controls the Suez Canal and the Strait of Aden, the entrances to the Red Sea; therefore, say the literalists, the promise given to Abraham is fulfilled in the British nation: they possess the gates of their enemies; they are the descendants of the Ten Lost Tribes.

The writer may be pardoned if he gives one more interesting illustration of the theory which assumes that the Scripture writers knew in detail certain particular events which would occur nineteen hundred years or more after their own day. The following paragraphs are taken from a pamphlet published in 1916. Its conclusions are based on a number of peculiar coincidences between certain figurative statements in Daniel and Revelation, and certain events of the present great world war. These coincidences are on a

par with the ones referred to in the illustrations we have already given :

“‘And in her [Germany] was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth’ (at this ‘time of the end’ ‘of the age’ of Satan’s rule) (Rev. xviii:24).

“Germany is also responsible for the Armenian massacres by the Turks. St. John in vision saw her as ‘the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus’ (Rev. xvii:6).

“‘And in their security [of Belgian neutrality and of Hague Conference peace promises] shall he destroy many’ (Dan. viii:25). Germany claims that forty fortresses have been taken by Austro-Germans to date. ‘But in his office shall be honor the god of fortresses by the help of a strange god; whosoever acknowledgeth him he will increase in glory; and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for a price’ (Dan. xi:39). (The Kaiser has bribed Turkey and Bulgaria to acknowledge and fight for him, by the help of his covenant partner, Satan).

“‘And at the time of the end the King of the South [France] contend with him; and the King of the North [Russia] shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he [the invader] shall enter into the countries [Belgium, France, Poland, Montenegro and Serbia], and shall overflow and pass through’ (v. 40). That is exactly what the Kaiser is trying to do now with the object of reaching ‘Egypt’ and the Holy Land—indeed Palestine is already an armed camp with his generals training the Turks—and they have a target placed on Golgotha Hill! (as prophesied in Dan. xi:41-44). Anti-Christ!

“‘But tidings out of the East [from Mesopotamia] and out of the North [from Russia?] shall trouble him; and he shall go forth with great fury to destroy and utterly to make away many. And he shall plant the tent of his palace between the sea and the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end and none shall help him’ (Dan. xi:44-45).”

Thus we see what literalism really means. It means the slavish following of the very letter or the very words of Scripture; the drawing of fanciful or unwarranted con-

clusions from such coincidences as the above; while the real spiritual significance of the words, or the essential implications of the passage, are ignored or overlooked and left unrecognized. Much of premillennial teaching is based on a literalism of this sort. Verbally, literally, it looks very scriptural, very correct; and those who hold it profess great loyalty to the Scriptures in this age of "defection from the word of God." But it altogether fails of Christ's meaning when He promised His disciples that He would come again. "I will not leave you comfortless," or desolate, "I come to you," means infinitely more than a literal return of Christ in the glorious body to reign on a visible throne. It means infinitely more than the establishment of a just, all-powerful and glorious government with headquarters in Jerusalem and millions of converted and adoring Jews restored to their ancient land.

We wish to consider one more conspicuous example of this literalism, the one on which the premillennial view is chiefly based; we refer to the premillennial interpretation of Rev. xx:4-6, "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands: and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

This passage appears at first sight to support the view that there will be two resurrections; some of these pre-

millennial teachers contend that there may be even more than two. On this passage we wish to remark:—

First, whenever any particular doctrine has a number of clear Scripture passages for its support, and one other passage appears to contradict or disagree, we interpret the one passage according to the many, and not the many according to the one. It is more reasonable to explain the one passage in harmony with the many, than to explain away the many in order to fit something peculiar in the one; and the Bible is so self-consistent, and so harmonious as a whole, that, as a rule, this can easily be done. The one inharmonious verse usually proves to be highly figurative, or it is an interpolation, or it is an expression of some non-authoritative view.

Secondly, the doctrine that there will be one resurrection of the bodies of the dead has been generally received, and a number of passages of Scripture support this view. Jesus says, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation [or condemnation]" (John v:28-29). Two different classes will be raised, it is true, but there will be only one resurrection. Jesus says "behold the hour cometh," which implies that both will be raised in the self-same hour. One voice of the Son of God—"the trumpet" call which Paul speaks of in 1 Cor. xv:52; one single summons—not two summonses separated by an interval of a thousand years—shall awaken both the good and the evil. This certainly means that they will both be raised at the same time. Again, Jesus says, "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all that he hath given me

I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at 'the last day' (John vi:39). Of course this refers only to the resurrection of the just, but it is to take place on "the last day," and, on the same "last day" the final judgment will take place according to John xii:48; and according to Rev. xx:12-13 the wicked also are raised on that "last day." "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works" (Rev. xx:12-13). It is useless to reply to this (as some premillennialists actually do) that "the hour," or "the last day" which Jesus speaks of may extend over a thousand years in this case, for Paul says "the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed" (1 Cor. xv:52). The trumpet sounding implies an instantaneous act. Hence "the hour cometh" and "the last day" imply a brief definite period in which the dead, both just and unjust, will be raised. These scriptures therefore plainly teach one definite resurrection, not two or three resurrections of the bodies of the dead.

Thirdly, resurrection does not always mean the resurrection of the body. It sometimes means the resurrection of those who were spiritually dead into a state of spiritual life. This is what Jesus means in John v:25, "Verily verily I say unto you the hour cometh *and now is* when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God and they that hear shall live." And it is what Paul means in Rom. vi:4 when he says "like as Christ was raised from the dead through

the glory of the Father so that we also might walk in newness of life." And it is what he means in Ephes. ii:4-5, "God who is rich in mercy for His great love wherewith He loved us even when we were dead in sins hath quickened us together with Christ and raised us up together," etc. And elsewhere Paul speaks of the future conversion of the Jews as a resurrection. He says "If the casting away of them is the reconciling of the world what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?" (Rom. xi:15).

We now come to the resurrection spoken of in Rev. xx:5 on which premillennial writers build so much. John says, "I saw the souls [not the bodies] of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God." These were the faithful martyrs, who in the Roman persecutions, had recently given up their lives. They were living and reigning now with Christ in Heaven, not reigning literally on earth. They were in a state of felicity and triumph; among the glorified they have a foremost place; and this exaltation of the martyred saints is called the first resurrection, and *it has no reference whatever to the resurrection of the bodies of the dead*. "And the rest of the dead [that is, the wicked dead] lived not again till the thousand years were finished"; and after that they lived again. But in what sense did they live again? We answer that after Satan is let loose the spirit of wickedness which was in them becomes operative and rampant upon earth again (as verses 8 and 9 proceed to tell), and "Gog and Magog" are gathered together for the great war. The glorified spirits of the saints may still be engaged in missions of benevolence and mercy to the earth. (See Matt. xviii:10, and Heb. i:14.) They co-operate with Christ and share in His spiritual reign; and thus they live again. The spirits of the wicked are in union with the Evil One in bringing mischief and desola-

tion upon the earth; and thus *they* also live again.* Thus we see a beautiful inner spiritual meaning that can be drawn naturally and legitimately from these words in Rev. xx:4-6. And the whole premillennial doctrine depending on the literal interpretation of the passage falls inevitably to the ground. For this doctrine of two resurrections, separated by a thousand years, is of vast importance in the Premillennial view; and it all depends on this single passage in the last book of the Bible—the most perplexing—the most enigmatical—the most difficult of all the writings it contains. When the literal interpretation of the passage, therefore, is shown to be untenable, the whole premillennial edifice is wrecked.

The Book of Revelation is an apocalyptic and highly figurative book. It is full of symbols and peculiar imagery. It was actually intended to conceal meanings, as well as to make them clear. In some cases even its numbers are symbols, and are not to be literally understood. In chap. vii it says "Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand"; "of the tribe of Simon were sealed twelve thousand"; and so on with all of the tribes. Does any one suppose that the number sealed would be a round even number in every case? Or that exactly the same number would be sealed from every tribe? Or that the smaller tribes would each contribute as many as the larger ones to the total number of the saved? Or that the total number sealed would be exactly one hundred and forty-four thousand, no more and

* Professor Calvin Goodspeed, in his book on "Messiah's Second Advent," goes much more fully and more particularly into the exposition of this peculiar passage. His Chapter V. is a very able and convincing review of it, although he does not note the influence which current apocalyptic literature must have had on the mind of the writer of the Book of Revelation.

no less? If so, such literalism would miss the writer's meaning altogether. These numbers are symbolic and were not intended to be taken literally. Again, in Rev. xxi:10-27 we have a view of the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven from God. According to the description it was a perfect cube. "And he measured the city with a reed, twelve thousand furlongs. [Here is the number twelve thousand and again.] The length and the breadth and the height thereof are equal" (verse 16). This passage also was never intended to be taken in a literal way. It is a symbolic representation of the perfection of the Christian state. And so with the number one thousand in Rev. xx:4. It is here used as a symbol of perfection or completeness. "John is not here giving us a forecast of an actual period of history lasting a thousand years." The statement that the martyr-saints "shall reign with Christ a thousand years" signifies the perfection of their felicity and glory in the heavenly state. It expresses the completeness of their triumph both in time and in degree. "In this particular passage the author uses a familiar Jewish form of thought, that of a reign of the Messiah in Palestine for a thousand years. He does this in order to paint in the richest colors an ideal picture of the blessedness of God's people in the heavenly sphere, and the complete triumph of Christ and his church over every opposing force; and the binding of Satan for the thousand years may signify the fact that ideally the triumph is already complete; and the loosing of him after the thousand years may signify that actually Satan and all of his forces of evil are still active, and the struggle goes on till the end of the troubled history of our earth. It is true the author speaks of the outbreak of war and wickedness following the triumphant reign of the saints in heaven. In his vision, one comes after the other in the order of

time, and our explanation follows that order on a previous page. Still we are not to suppose that these activities of good and evil may not be contemporaneous in a degree. "Notes of sequences of time count for little in visions and dreams." The two activities may have gone on at times on parallel lines; nothing to the contrary can be proved from such highly figurative speech. Thus we have explained this difficult passage in a perfectly legitimate way without contradicting other passages which teach that there will be one resurrection of the bodies of the dead.

The influence of the prevalent apocalyptic modes of thinking, and of current apocalyptic literature, was evidently strong on the author's mind when he wrote this Book of Revelation, and it is especially apparent in this peculiar passage which we have just reviewed. We quote here from a modern student who has given this subject of apocalyptic literature, and its influence on the early church, an earnest and careful consideration.

"The idea of a Millennial reign of the Messiah on earth, and of the binding of His enemies in chains, or in prison, is much older than the New Testament. This idea, or something like it, occurs in the Isaiah Apocalypse (Isaiah xxiv:27), when Jehovah is said to smite the host of the high ones on high, and the kings of the earth on the earth, and they are to be cast into prison or the pit FOR MANY DAYS, and afterward visited or judged. So in the Apocalypse of Enoch the evil spirits are held in prison until the final judgment. The Messianic reign in most Jewish writings is to continue forever, but in Jubilees (second century B.C.) it is apparently to be of temporary duration; also in Enoch 91-104, and probably in Psalms of Solomon (both in first century B.C.), the idea of its temporary duration occurs, with the final judgment at the end of it. The idea of two

resurrections would thus easily arise, one of righteous Israel at the beginning of the Messianic kingdom to share in it, and the other at the end of all others for final judgment. In the first century A.D. 2 Enoch makes the Messianic kingdom continue for a thousand years; and the Ezra Apocalypse (2 Esdras of the Apocrypha), for four hundred years. In the latter, some of the saints are to rise and share in this kingdom." Thus the resemblances between the ideas given in Rev. xx:1-6 and the ideas to be found in other apocalyptic works are too evident to be overlooked. They show again that human characteristics are most apparent in the writers of the Holy Scriptures, and that human influences entered into their life and thought, and gave color to what they wrote; and that these characteristics and influences call for open-minded consideration when we seek to learn what they really teach. And this is especially true when we endeavor to interpret such a passage as Rev. xx:1-6.

We have now given a general review of premillennial teachings, and we find that they are not supported by the Scriptures; that they are based on literalistic interpretations; that they are akin to the misconceptions which the first disciples had about Christ's kingdom; that they substitute materialistic for spiritual views; that they depend on a mistaken view of prophecy; and that they altogether miss the larger meanings of the words of Christ. We regret that many earnest, estimable people hold these views, and that some Christian ministers are zealous in proclaiming them. We regret that these views are so prominent in various Bible Institutes in New York, Chicago, Minneapolis, Los Angeles, Toronto and elsewhere. The pure and benevolent spirit of Moody is upon these people in a large degree, and they are zealous in Evangelistic work; but how

can they lead in a sweeping movement of the universal kingdom, how can they enter into its larger ranges of truth, while they are encumbered with such views as these? May they never become like the Jewish Christians, the Christians of the circumcision class, who were devoted to Jesus we must admit, but devoted to Him as the Christ of their Jewish conceptions and their Jewish hopes. But the manifold Christ, the universal Christ that Jesus really was, was beyond the range of their thoughts. He was obscured for them by the outgrown Jewish traditions which they refused to yield, and which loomed too large before their view; and when the universal Christ DID APPEAR in the larger and more comprehensive movement led by Paul they could not see Him, and they had but limited sympathy with His work.*

* In the Appendix the reader will find a particularly strong argument against the premillennial view, from the pen of a contributor to the "Christian Guardian," Toronto, Sept. 27th, 1916. (See NOTE E.)

CHAPTER XI.

THE UNSHAKEN BASIS OF FAITH.

IN the preceding chapter we showed that we must exercise our judgment (in other words, we must criticise) if we are to interpret the Holy Scriptures aright; that unless we exercise our judgment, or criticise in a sane and open-minded way, we shall be led into all sorts of unwarranted, fanciful and far-fetched conclusions; and that we must discern and discriminate, or exercise our judgment, or we shall get out of harmony with the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth Himself. And we assumed that the scientific investigation of the Scriptures as literature was not out of harmony with the Spirit which we find in these Scriptures, since they invite criticism by saying "prove all things, hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. v:21); and since Paul, speaking under the influence of the same Spirit, prays that our "love may abound more and more IN KNOWLEDGE AND ALL DISCERNMENT; so that ye may approve the things that are excellent," or "prove the things that differ" as the margin says (Phil. i:9-10 R.V.); and since Christ Himself, in the Sermon on the Mount, set the example, and thereby teaches us to use the Old Testament Scriptures in a very discriminating way (see Matt. v:21, 27, 33, 38, 43). And we assumed that scientific investigation of the Scriptures has brought us great gains, in clearer and enlarged views of historical situations, in clearer views of what the prophets of old really were; and we assumed further that these gains more than compensate for the loss of certain traditional views—and we write the following chapter to assure those who may still have their anxieties and fears.

It is well known that many earnest, religious men do

not take kindly to modern critical views. They say that, according to the critics, Moses did not write the Pentateuch, David did not write the Psalms, or at most only a few of them, Isaiah wrote only about one half of the book that bears his name, and who wrote the rest of it we do not know. Some of the passages that we used to think were parts of the Word of God are only human traditions, and the work of criticism is still going on. Where is this thing going to end? If they cast doubt on one part of the Scriptures, how can we be sure about the rest? What is going to be left for us to depend upon and believe after the critics have done their work?

To this question we answer in the first place that Christ is left—which means that everything essential in Christianity is left. If it should be further asked How can we be sure that Jesus the Galilean was an historical character? We reply that one might as well ask How do we know for sure that such a man as Mohammed ever lived? We know because there is such a religion as Mohammedanism; and about 200,000,000 human beings hold the faith and observe the ceremonies of that religion; and it has a long historical record that can be traced back to the man Mohammed, born in *Mecca*, Arabia, A.D. 570, and died A.D. 632, somewhere in Arabia, after a career of which we have some reliable accounts. In a similar way Christianity has an historical record that can be traced back to the Man of Galilee. To illustrate this differently one might as well ask how do we know that such a man as William Shakespeare ever lived. We answer, because we have certain dramatic works entitled "Macbeth," "Hamlet," "King Lear," "Coriolanus," "Julius Cæsar," etc. These works must have had an author, and, by common consent, Shakespeare was the man. Just so in the New Testament we have certain remarkable

parables, for example, The Prodigal Son, The Good Samaritan, The Good Shepherd, The Sower and the Various Kinds of Soil, The Wicked Husbandmen, The Unforgiving Debtor, The Leaven in the Meal, The Man Borrowing Bread at the Midnight Hour, The Marriage Feast for the King's Son, The Unfaithful Steward, etc. An occasional extreme critic may argue that Bacon wrote the plays attributed to Shakespeare; but nobody doubts that Jesus of Nazareth was the author of the parables attributed to Him. One cannot add a word to, or take a word from, these parables—or otherwise alter them—without spoiling them. They are simplicity itself and yet they mirror infinite depths. Here we are sure that we have the very words of Christ. And beside these parables we have certain outlines—or brief discourses—such as the Lord's Prayer, the conversation with Nicodemus, the conversation with the woman of Samaria, the address at Nazareth in Luke iv:16-28, the discourse on the Comforter in John xiv:16, the terrible denunciation of the Pharisees in Matt. xxiii; and no one doubts that these discourses originated with Him.

But note what an admission we have here. Suppose that every other part of the Bible had been irrecoverably lost, or that these other parts had never been incorporated in the Book; suppose that the few parables and discourses mentioned were all that we were sure of and that (apart from nature) these were the only source of our knowledge of God; suppose that only these instructed us about His Spiritual Kingdom among men—even then what a wealth of teaching would still be ours. In these few parables and discourses we have the Fatherhood of God; the Brotherhood of Man; the Sonship and Divinity of Christ; Redemption of Mankind by Christ; the Personality and Divinity of the Holy Spirit; human depravity; human

need of the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit's work in convincing, regenerating, comforting and inspiring human minds; human accountability to God; a divine judgment on human conduct; future retributions and rewards; a gospel for the individual man; a gospel for the community or state; all the great doctrines used by evangelists of every age; all the doctrines of a gospel of social regeneration for this age—all of these are briefly stated or clearly implied in the passages to which we have referred, and which no sceptic or critic even doubts to be the teaching of the Man of Galilee. Nearly all of the great modern religious controversies rage about matters that are subordinate. Some men or some sect strive to put some minor thing into the place of the supreme. The warfare raises a smoke that obscures the great realities; but after the smoke is dissipated, the realities remain; and the minor things recede to where they belong. Correct views about predestination, the meaning of inspiration, the nature of the miraculous, are not essential to salvation nor to the living of a devout, sincere, upright, benevolent life. "What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" So that if we were forced to accept what the advanced critics claim, Christ and the great essentials of religion would still be left.

But in addition to the Christianity set forth in the Gospels we have Christianity as conceived of and proclaimed by the Apostle Paul. The critics have reviewed his epistles, too, of course. They are not convinced of the genuineness of some of these, for instance, the ones often called the Pastoral Epistles, which Christian believers regard as belonging to the latter part of Paul's life. But there are four epistles, viz., the two to the Corinthian church and the epistles to the Galatians and the Romans, which even the

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German rationalist Baur was forced to admit to be genuine productions of St. Paul. And Joseph Agar Beet, the eminent Wesleyan theologian, states that on this admission the radical critics are generally agreed. And we might add that there are other works, such as the priceless epistles to the Philippians and the Colossians, which these critics, with hardly an exception, admit are from the hand of Paul. We need not thank them for their admissions just here. Ordinary people, with enlightened spiritual insight, can see ever so much more than some of them, with all of their learning, can see. But taking just the four epistles which Baur mentions, will the reader note that in Baur's admission practically everything is yielded that the Christian believer needs as a basis for his faith. Apart from any theory of inspiration, we have here a man called Paul, with excellent powers of observation, an able reasoner, possessed with philosophic instinct in a large degree, with the loftier endowments of emotion and imagination; but at the same time a man of practical sagacity, an excellent manager of affairs, who can look after details, capable of being an administrator or diplomatist or general. And this man is contemporary with Jesus Christ, and has mingled with His followers and seen their devotion and learned their views; and has been converted from a zealous, persecuting Jew to a loyal and enthusiastic disciple—a very bondservant of the Christ; and he believes that “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,” and that after His death and burial He appeared again to certain individuals and groups of His disciples (1 Cor. xv:1-10); and last of all He appeared to Paul himself; and after much mature reflection this Paul develops a more mature conception of Christ than even the authors of the Synoptic Gospels had. Now in these admitted writings of the apostle all of the great

essential doctrines of Christianity can be found, the Fatherhood of God, the Sonship and Divinity of Christ, the personality and work of the Holy Spirit, human depravity, human accountability to God, etc., etc., are all stated or illustrated in connexion with his work. And the critics admit that Paul believed and taught all of this. After this admission, will any honest, Christian man, disturbed by recent criticism, say again that he hardly knows what to believe any more? Let him turn to these epistles of St. Paul.

The foregoing statements are beyond all controversy or doubt; but if they needed any confirmation we have it in the free testimonies of destructive critics and free inquirers, who have derived their conceptions of Christianity and Christ from such parts of the Gospel as we have given above. We select the following from a larger number that might be given:

"1. RENAN says: 'The Incomparable Man to whom the universal conscience has decreed the title of Son of God—and that with justice, since He has advanced religion as none other has done.' 'Between Thee and God there is no longer any distinction.' 'His beauty is eternal, His Kingdom shall have no end.' 'This Christ of the Gospels is the most beautiful incarnation of God in the most beautiful of forms.'

"2. ROUSSEAU concludes a famous passage with the words, 'If the life and death of Socrates are those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of a God.'

"3. STRAUSS was the foremost champion of modern scepticism respecting Him, yet Strauss wrote that Jesus 'stands foremost among those who have given a higher ideal to humanity'; and 'it is impossible to refrain from admiring and loving Him.' 'Never at any time will it be possible to rise above Him, nor to imagine any one who shall be even equal with Him.' 'He is the highest object we can possibly imagine in respect of religion: the Being without whose presence in the mind perfect piety is impossible.'

"4. CHANNING was a Unitarian, yet he wrote: 'I believe Jesus Christ to be more than a human being. The combination of the spirit of Humanity in its loveliest and tenderest form with the consciousness of unrivalled and Divine glories, is the most wonderful distinction of this wonderful character.'

"5. J. S. MILL wrote that 'there is no better rule than so to live that Christ would approve our life.'

"6. The views of KEIM diverge very widely from those of Churchmen in many points, yet he ends his 'Jesu von Nazara' by saying that 'Christianity is the crown of all the creations of God, and Jesus is the chosen of God, God's image, and best-loved, and master-workman, and world-shaper in the history of mankind. He and no other is and remains the appointed standard-bearer of the world's progress, who shall triumph over the quagmires and the spirits of darkness of the nether Kosmos.'

"7. THEODORE PARKER testifies that 'Christ unites in Himself the sublimest precepts and divinest practices. He pours out a doctrine beautiful as the light, sublime as heaven, and true as God.'

"8. MATTHEW ARNOLD differed widely from views regarded as orthodox, yet, after describing the True God as 'the Eternal who makes for righteousness,' he adds, 'from whom Jesus came forth, and whose Spirit governs the course of humanity.'

"9. GOETHE calls Him 'the Divine Man, the Holy One, the type and model of all men.' "*

If it should be asked Why do sceptics and extreme critics admit so much, and thus seemingly give their case away? Why do they not say that the character of Jesus and the epistles of Paul are all inventions readily accepted in that early, credulous age? We answer with Dr. Newell Dwight Hillis, "As if men first of all invent a lie and inflate a bubble myth, and then go out in support of it to get themselves mobbed, kicked through the streets, thrown from windows, tortured on the rack, crucified and burned alive after incredible heroism for thirty years. To say that the

* The foregoing testimonials to Christ have been selected from Farrar's "Life of Lives," chap. iv.

disciples invented the story of Jesus and then martyred themselves for their falsehood is as intellectually stupid and silly as it is morally monstrous." No! sceptics and free inquirers are driven to their testimonies and admissions by the incontrovertible facts.

But it is said that our present gospel records were not issued till much later than is commonly supposed. The early church lived on the unwritten gospel. This was passed from one to another—by oral tradition—from those who had heard it from our Lord. Mark's Gospel did not appear in its present form till A.D. 68. The Gospels according to Matthew and Luke came later still. And the Gospel according to John was not produced till late in the first century; some claim that it was not produced till many years after the second century began. And they say that in reading these gospel records we are not always sure that we have the very words of Jesus; they claim that we have in them reflections of the thoughts and views of the church in the later period in which they were produced; that the portrait of Christ in these gospels is given in the colors and hues of these later dates.

In answer to this we reply, It may be that in some places we have the author's comment where we formerly thought that we had the words of Jesus. For instance Mark viii:27, etc., tells us that Jesus and His disciples went to Cæsarea Philippi and there He questioned them about His Messiahship. "He asked His disciples saying unto them who do men say that I am?" Mark gives the oldest record. And Matt. xvi:13, etc., recording the same interview, says "He asked His disciples saying who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" The added words in Matthew, "the Son of Man," may be the author's explanation and not the words of Jesus. But we should like to ask, What difference does

this make to the essential meaning or value of the passage?

Again, in John's Gospel, in chaps. iii and iv for instance, we are not always sure just where the words of Jesus leave off, and where the comments of the author begin. John's Gospel is, no doubt, substantially the gospel as taught by John during his ministry in Ephesus, where according to tradition, he was overseer of the church during the later years of his long life. Jesus had spoken to the Jewish people in Aramaic, a dialect akin to the Hebrew language, and in reproducing His teaching for people of Asia Minor the author of John's Gospel had to translate the words, and recast the expressions, into such a form as his immediate readers would most readily understand. This would account for the difference between the style of the language of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels, and His style in the Gospel according to John. And naturally the conceptions of the author and his more mature insight and experience are reflected in what he wrote. But again we ask what difference does that make to the essential meaning and the real value of the book, unless it be to increase its value and interest to us? One thing we are sure of, and that is that the author was as deeply illuminated by the Divine Spirit as any human being ever was. No other book has had such a circulation. No other has had such an influence for good. It is now studied in 500 languages of earth. It has become the text of special study in continents undreamed of in John's day, and the saintly and disconsolate of every age have found comfort in the fourteenth chapter of this incomparable book. Thus the intuitions of the general heart of mankind also assure us that it is from God. Some critics claim that we have it, just as it came from the hand of John. Others reason from peculiarities in certain parts of it, that John left his reminiscences of Jesus, and that these were revised

and issued by some disciple of a little later date. We believe it makes no essential difference. The question of its inspiration is settled by the contents of the book.

But there is another fact and another argument which makes our position still stronger, if this were necessary or possible. Much of the teaching of Jesus is about our human nature, and about the effects which the divine life, through the Spirit of God, has upon this nature in our present conditions in this world. In other words Jesus states the laws or ways in which our human nature manifests itself, and He states the laws of the spiritual life. Take the following examples from the Gospels, and one or two from the writings of St. Paul. Those selected from Paul are derived from Jesus and were made clear and familiar to him through his own experience of the Spirit's working in his inner life:

John iii:20-21—

"For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

"But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God."

John ix:39—

"And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind."

Romans viii:5-8—

"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

"For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

"So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God."

Matthew xvi:25—

"For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it."

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Mark viii:35—

"For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it."

Matthew v:3—

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the Kingdom of Heaven."

Matthew v:5—

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."

John vii:17—

"If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."

Matthew v:8—

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

John xiv:21—

"He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."

Acts i:8—

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Matthew xvii:20—

"And Jesus said unto them, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you."

The foregoing texts are selected from a large number of that class. In regard to them we may remark, first, that devout Christian people call many of them promises or "precious promises." We call them "laws," because they are uniformly true. As the laws of nature are statements of the unvarying sequence of events in nature, so these laws of the spiritual life are statements of the order that prevails in the spiritual realm. Again, we note that they

are stated with scientific precision. After years of study and numberless experiments Kepler, the devout astronomer, announced that "the square of a planet's periodic time is proportional to the cube of its mean distance from the sun." This rule is generally known among students as "Kepler's third law." And Isaac Newton, another devout student of nature, after years of study and investigation, announced the law of gravitation in these words, "Every body in the universe attracts every other body directly as the mass and inversely as the square of the distance apart." Thus these men of science have given us most carefully guarded statements of universal law. Not a word needs to be added to them, and not a word can be taken away. And the laws of the spiritual life quoted above are worded just as exactly and as guardedly as the laws announced by Kepler or Newton or any other scientific man. Even where there are repetitions or varying statements this is so. Take for example the statement about saving one's life by losing it for Christ's sake, a statement which occurs in some form in each of the Four Gospels. The variation in statement is not accidental, but agrees with a real difference in fact. Let the reader turn back again to Matt. xvi:25 and Mark viii:35 for proof of this. Matthew says that "he that loseth his life for Christ's sake shall FIND it," and Mark says that he who loses it for His sake and the Gospels shall SAVE it. To lose one's life for Christ's sake is one thing and to lose one's life for the Gospel's sake may be quite another thing. For instance, John Wesley lost everything he had for Christ's sake first. He gave up reputation, friendship, ambition for position, rank, and every earthly interest, and crossed the Atlantic to convert the Indians of Georgia. He did this from love of humanity and in obedience to Christ's words as he understood them then. But he was a staunch,

rigid high churchman, and he went to Georgia to make the Indians good high churchmen, too. And he completely failed; losing all he had through obedience to Christ's words. But on returning to England he FOUND his life in the larger vision of the Gospel of Christ's Spiritual Kingdom. It came to him as a great discovery. He again gave up everything in preaching this gospel of a larger life, and in doing so he saved his life. He soon became rich in every respect, in love, insight, understanding, influence over men in increased number of friends, and even in his earthly means. There were two different experiences. The one resulted in a discovery or revelation as stated in Matt. xvi:25. The other resulted in an actual enrichment as stated in Mark viii:35.

Again we remark that the value of these statements of the laws of motion or of gravitation does not depend on the question who discovered them or who first announced them to the world. It is very interesting to know who discovered them and how the discovery came about, but it is not essential. They would be just as true if the authors were unknown. This is also true of the foregoing laws of the spiritual life. They are absolutely true even if the critics could prove that Jesus did not announce them first; they would be true even if they could prove that He was not an historical character—which no one imagines they can ever do. In fact some of these laws can be found in the Old Testament, which is another way of saying that they had an earlier discoverer whose name may be now unknown. For instance, the Beautitude "Blessed are the meek" is taken from the Thirty-seventh Psalm; and the Beautitude "Blessed are the pure in heart" is a condensed statement of the meaning of the Seventy-second Psalm; and we may not be sure who were the authors of these psalms. Jesus in

these two instances merely repeated what He had learned in them. Most of the other statements of the spiritual laws were entirely original with Himself, but whether original with Him, or quoted from some Old Testament book, it makes no difference—their truth and value are the same.

We remark again that some of these statements of the higher laws do not agree with the appearance of things. Mark viii:35 virtually states that in the Spiritual Kingdom a man may gain everything by giving everything away; and this statement appears to be contradicted by the common experiences of life. But even the law of gravitation does not always agree with the appearance of things. We see the flies in the summer walking on the ceiling with their backs downward; and the men of science assure us that the atmosphere has weight, that it is rarer and lighter two miles up. That on the earth's level surface the pressure is fifteen pounds to the square inch, and that we walk about under all of this superincumbent weight. We may protest that this does not look reasonable or that we do not believe it, but by means of an air pump the man of science can demonstrate it before our eyes. And these laws of the spiritual life also can be verified in the crucible of experience. If any one doubts let him read the stories of remarkable conversions given in Harold Begbie's "In the Hands of the Potter" and "Twice born Men." These are demonstrations of the laws of the spiritual life as given by Paul in the eighth chapter of Romans. They prove that "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus" makes men "free from the law of sin and death." We have shown on a previous page how Wesley proved that a man may gain everything by giving everything away, but many other experiences beside Wesley's might be given of men acting in obedience to Christ's words as they understood them at the time, in

loyalty to the highest convictions they had, even when those convictions were not wholly correct, and their view was not sufficiently broad. We refer to men whose will was right but whose judgment was in error in a degree, and who lost everything for Christ's sake and at length obtained a new revelation of Christ according to John xiv:21. In other words they found a larger life and a larger and clearer range of view. "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them he it is that loveth me and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him AND WILL MANIFEST MYSELF UNTO HIM." Men of science usually make a number of experiments before they make a discovery, and student-beginners sometimes make several mistakes before they verify one of nature's laws; and so it is in the spiritual life. Earnest men usually make a number of failures before they satisfactorily verify the laws of the Spiritual Kingdom, or before they "prove the promises," as devout Christian people would say. But if we persevere and eliminate the errors we discover in our ways, we shall surely verify the law, we "shall know the truth and the truth shall make us free" (John viii:32). Act on the assumption that Christ lives and reigns and thou shalt prove that He lives and reigns for thee.

Some of these laws are verified on a larger scale in the great crises of national life. In the hour of betrayal, in the most off-handed manner, Jesus said "they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." This is another statement of universal law. It means that those rulers who use military force to advance their interests, or to extend their dominion, shall suffer injury, loss, or ruin through military force. Jesus taught non-resistance to the individual. He would have His followers suffer injustice and wrong in a patient, forgiving spirit, instead of resorting to retaliation

and revenge. But before the great war the average young Prussian aristocrat would toss his head in contempt at the mention of Christianity. "Christianity," he would say, "was given first to a conquered and subject race. It was a religion adapted to such a race, but it is no religion for the educated and dominant German race." And the German war-lords ventured to put Christ's statement to the test on the assumption that the Galilean was in error; but at length the great German nation, defeated, impoverished and exhausted, will be admitting with the baffled Roman emperor of old, "tandem viciste Galileæ" ("at length O Galilean thou hast conquered"). "They that take the sword shall perish with the sword!"

At the back of this gospel story is the long, long history of the Jewish race. That race was organized as a nation and started on its unique career by Moses, a man of great constructive genius, who lived so near to God that he caught the Divine vision and believed in the Providential mission of his race. In a most unpromising stage of their development he became their deliverer, statesman and judge. He taught them the elementary truths of the true religion and became their moral and spiritual guide. That they might retain a purer conception of God and a higher standard of morals he enjoined a strict avoidance of all entangling associations with neighboring idolatrous peoples and tribes. After his time there followed a checkered history of several hundred years; periods of loyalty to Jehovah accompanied by prosperity and peace, then lapses into idolatry accompanied by periods of disaster and distress. After this there appears upon the scene another great spiritual and organizing genius named Samuel, through whom the nation receives moral and religious teaching and reformation that lays a foundation for material wealth and

power. After him comes the great warrior, statesman, diplomatist, David, who, working on this foundation, is loyal to Jehovah in the main, and extends Jewish dominion and influence greatly during his glorious reign. After this splendid period which lasted till the death of his more peaceful and more magnificent son, Solomon, there followed division and lapses again into the idolatries and immoralities of the heathen; and at length came, as a consequence, national degeneracy, downfall and exile into heathen lands. During this period of degeneracy there appeared at times the Prophets, great moral and religious teachers, the like of whom no other ancient people ever produced, whose visions of a Divine Providence and purpose were supernatural, and whose denunciations and warnings about social injustice are an arsenal of weapons for moral and social reformers of every age.

In a time of prosperity assurance had been given to David that, upon certain conditions, there would be an unending succession of rulers in his line; and when dark days came, and some of the kings in his line trampled on the better traditions, and became leaders in idolatrous worship, this assurance remained as a distant and hazy background in the minds of the faithful few. No doubt Isaiah had had this perplexing assurance, this shadowy background, in his early thoughts; but at length, in a time of national forboding and disaster, there dawned on his inspired mind the conception of a Messiah King, "a living, real personality, the guardian of his country now, its deliverer and governor hereafter."* This character is first distinctly sketched in the passages about Immanuel in Isaiah, chaps. vii and ix, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name

* From Driver on "Isaiah, His Life and Times."

shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Additional characteristics of this marvellous personality were added more than thirty years afterward in the ever-memorable passage in Isaiah xi:1-5, "And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit, and the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah." It is perfectly certain that these predictions by Isaiah were delivered several hundred years before the Christian Era began. We find them in the translation of the Old Testament Scriptures into Greek, commonly called the Septuagint Version, and we know that this translation was made nearly three hundred years before the time of Christ.

This conception of a Messiah king appears again and again in the deliverances of these great prophets. In Micah v:2 He is the ruler of Israel whose "goings forth" had been from eternity. In Jere. xxiii:5-6 and xxxiii:15-16, He is the Righteous Branch who shall reign as King "and deal wisely and execute judgment and justice" and His name is specially mentioned as "the Lord our Righteousness." In Ezekiel xxxiv:23-26 and xxxvii:24-25 He is the Shepherd and Prince of a reunited and prosperous people. In Zech. ix:9 He is the coming king; just, lowly and bringing salvation to the daughters of Zion and Jerusalem. Thus He is represented as Ruler, Counsellor, Teacher and Saviour to a restored and triumphant Israelitish race. In the darkest periods this Messianic hope loomed up most prominently. It lived through the troubled period that followed the restoration from the exile in Babylon, the period in which inspiration and prophecy had temporarily passed away, the

period in which they were in conflict with, or in subjection to, some foreign power; until at length that marvellous personality appeared in the midst of them, Jesus of Nazareth, the crowning glory of the Jewish race, the fulfillment, in a spiritual sense, of all that the great Prophets had foretold, whose work transcended all that they had foreseen. This brief outline of Jewish history is so wonderfully illuminated by modern criticism; it brings a providential purpose with such clearness and vividness before our view; it presents such an evident divine preparation for the Christianity of Christ—that instead of faith being weakened or overthrown, it is placed upon a stronger and more rational basis than ever before. When King Frederick the Great requested a certain courtier teacher to present the evidences of Christianity in the most condensed form the courtier-teacher aptly replied, “The Jews, your majesty.”

CHAPTER XII.

THE NEXT DIVINE VISITATION.

IN every Divine visitation there is the same suddenness of the first manifestations; the same awakening sense of the Unseen Presence; the same mighty though mysterious workings of the Divine Spirit; the same pervading conviction in human society that an unseen power is working in its life and movements—and irresistibly leavening them all. But each new age has its peculiar conditions and problems; and these give their coloring to the new revival or reformation; and they bring out new manifestations of the greatness of the manifold Christ; new illustrations of His inexhaustible teachings; new illustrations, as Paul would say, of “the unsearchable riches of Christ.” We proceed to state some of the characteristics of the present time, characteristics that create the problems that the morally and spiritually awakened, the progressive statesmen, economists, philanthropists, the moral and religious leaders, and their sympathizers and helpers, will have to study and solve, in the light that the new Divine visitation will bring.*

First then there is the following fact: The application of the forces of steam, electricity, gasoline, etc., to machinery has immeasurably increased the productive power of indus-

*The writer will give only the briefest outline of this problem in the present book, because he has already written another book on this question. This book is entitled “Christianity and Socialism”; but the subject of it really is, the iniquitous misdistribution of material wealth, the great problem of our times; and the application of Christ’s teachings on wealth, the only solution of the problem. In this book all of the main parts of the subject are briefly considered. It is a book of 74 pages, concisely written, and adapted to busy men who wish to be intelligent on this great living question, but have not time to study larger works. Published by William Briggs, Toronto.

try, and correspondingly increased the wealth and power of nations. The United States of America had more than 22,600 millionaires in the year 1917—an increase of more than 7,900 over the preceding year. There are ten persons who pay taxes on an income of more than \$5,000,000 a year; there are nine whose income is between \$4,000,000 and \$5,000,000 a year; fourteen receiving between \$3,000,000 and \$4,000,000; thirty-four, between \$2,000,000 and \$3,000,000. There are more than 3,700 men who may be classed as multimillionaires. There are ten men who are each worth as much as \$125,000,000. These figures are taken from the published statistics of the Income Tax Division of the United States Internal Revenue Bureau. They were issued in December, 1917; and we may rest assured that these estimates are conservative and low enough. They are rather within the mark than beyond it. These U. S. citizens would not overstate their wealth when it was being estimated with the question of taxation in view. For the sake of brevity we refrain from giving figures regarding the wealth of Great Britain or Canada. In addition to all this, there is the deplorable fact that these men of immense wealth have been getting possession of the land, as the following extract from a U. S. paper will show:

"The home owning farmer is disappearing. In some states he is becoming the exception. In 1880 25.6% of our farmers were tenants; in 1910 the percentage had risen to 37%. In a number of western states tenancy has risen to 50 or 60%, and in some counties in the west and southwest it is universal.

"Feudal Farm Barons.

"There is 400,000,000 acres of land in the United States enclosed in farms that is not cultivated at all. Worse than that, there is 200,000,000 acres, according to the census, dedicated to great feudal holdings whose average size is 4,230 acres. One-quarter of the acreage of the

United States is owned by less than 50,000 persons. This is an area considerably greater than the combined area of Germany and Great Britain with a population of 110,000,000 souls.—From 'Real Democracy, November 14th, 1917.'

We may add another interesting fact for Canadian readers. The Canadian Pacific Railway Company is one of the largest land-owners in the world. In spite of the sale of millions of acres from the original grant of 26,700,000 acres, they still possess (at least till two or three years ago they possessed) 11,000,000 acres, worth, on the basis of sales in 1912, \$175,000,000.

We notice still another fact. This vast wealth (in the United States) has been in the process of concentration into fewer and fewer hands. Smaller business concerns have had to combine in order to save themselves in the ruthless competitions with the larger ones. Smaller corporations, etc., have been devoured by the larger ones. It is not easy to find out the exact proportion of the wealth of the nation that a small fraction of the population owns, because the ratio is changing somewhat from year to year. But at the time of the outbreak of the war 1/350 of the population owned about 1/5 of the wealth of the United States. These figures are probably not far from the mark.

We notice now a fourth fact. The evil effects of these vast accumulations of wealth into the hands of a few men, are seen in the political, economic, social, moral and religious spheres. In the political sphere these men of wealth have the power, which some of them freely use, to subsidize the press; to mystify, mislead, and corrupt the electorate; to hold up or hinder legislation that would affect their own special interests, and benefit the toiling, unprivileged multitudes. In the economic sphere these men, by the manipulation or control of the markets, by their control of the means of dis-

tribution, by their immensely large holdings of stock, and their power of directorship, practically control vast amounts of wealth that are still in the hands of other individual owners. As an illustration of this sort of control let us mention a single fact. Not long before the entrance of the United States into the war with Germany, a few of these multimillionaires in Chicago, by their control of the egg market, secured a profit of \$7,000,000 in a few weeks. And who paid this \$7,000,000? We shall proceed to tell. At the other end of the social scale there are more than 18,300,000 wage-earners in the United States, that is about three-fourths of the wage-earning portion of the nation, whose average income was \$480.00 a year. People of this class paid the \$7,000,000 to the men of wealth * And Robert Hunter, a careful and conservative investigator of these conditions, says that "in fairly prosperous times no less than 10,000,000 of persons in the United States are underfed, under-clothed and poorly housed." And how could it be otherwise? How can a working man pay high house rent in a town or city, and support a wife and family in comfort or decency, on \$480.00 a year, even with the cost of living what it was before the war? Our present industrial economy results in woman labor and child labor in the factories; it discourages marriage, it breeds immorality; it drives the weaker classes to the slums; it works out naturally and inevitably into conditions of physical deterioration, degeneracy, degradation and disease, in millions upon millions of human beings in our boasted Anglo-

* These great and unjust inequalities of fortune tend powerfully to alienate the toiling masses from the church; because some of these men of wealth are members and supporters of some of the large city churches. We shall not discuss this subject, but refer the reader to two very interesting articles in the Appendix. (See NOTES F and H).

Saxon civilization. We have been using conditions in the United States, not invidiously, but only as illustrations of the most glaring problem of our times.* Sceptical students of our civilization who come to us from Oriental lands say that the low-down classes of London, England, are in as bad a state, in every respect, as those of Tokio, Japan. Is it any wonder that such appalling conditions have culminated in the world-wide catastrophe of war and woe, of horror and desolation? If there is a God in Heaven who hates injustice, who hears the cry of the oppressed, who spoke in thunderous warnings through the Hebrew prophets in ancient times, who works in natural and social forces, through inexorable and immutable laws, and who, when He raises the lowest and weakest requires the sacrifice of the noblest and best, as He did when He gave His only begotten Son—how could such conditions fail to culminate at length in some such crisis as our civilization is now passing through? For we believe that Karl Liebknecht, the most conspicuous moral hero of the German race, was right when he declared, just before the war began, that “this war is an imperialistic war for the domination of world markets.” It is, on the part of Germany, essentially a capitalistic war. It is a war whose purpose is to hold back and ruin the growing labor movement.

And the war has already been solving some of the industrial and economic problems that we have been reviewing; at least it has begun, and greatly promoted their solution. Already it has corrected some great abuses, and brought

* One favorable sign is the fact that even before the war the great church courts have been awakening to the conditions of social injustice that prevail. In the Appendix the reader will find the pronouncement (in May, 1916) of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church (north) of the United States. (See NOTE G.)

about some long-desired and beneficent results. The coal mines of South Wales, and the railways of Great Britain, have come under state control, and all former anti-socialistic arguments of reluctant and conservative statesmen have been hushed. The higher good of benefitting or saving the nation demanded the change. And even the food supply of the nation is considered the property of the nation, and is under governmental control; and thousands of acres of land formerly used as game preserves are now cultivated for the purpose of meeting the common need. As Lloyd George, the British Premier, said not long ago, "When the smoke of this great conflict has been dissolved there will appear a new Britain. Its commerce, trade and industry will be new; there will be new conditions of life and toil, new conditions for capital and labor, and new relations between the both of them and the state. Old principles will survive, but there will a new outlook and character in the land." He goes on to say "there have been epochs in the history of the world where in a few raging years the character and destiny of the whole race has been determined for unknown ages; and the present period is an epoch of this kind. Let us not be weary in well-doing for in due time we shall reap if we faint not." Thus Lloyd George is optimistic here as he usually is. We fear, however, that the problem of the unjust distribution of wealth is not yet fully or finally solved, and that it never will be solved by war alone; but we leave the subject for the present, as it will come up again in the latter part of this Chapter when we consider the relation of wealth to the spiritual and religious life.

Another problem of our times has been becoming more and more prominent in recent years; we mean the problem of a divided Christendom, especially the problem of the

divisions in the Protestant portion of Christendom. Our Lord prayed for His disciples that they all might be one, "even as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in me, that the world may believe that thou didst send me" (John xvii:21). Of course He meant a spiritual unity, a unity in love, a unity of faith in Him and devotion to Him as their common Lord; a unity of purpose and aim in promoting His Kingdom in the world. But wherever that spiritual unity is intelligent and strong and mature it powerfully tends to organic unity as well. Where love is deep and broad and patient and considerate the alleged reasons for maintaining rival religious organizations will dwindle and crumble and pass away. In the Great Reformation when people became freed from the bondage of a great ecclesiastical system, "liberty" became the dominant idea and the dominant word. They revelled in liberty, they became intoxicated with liberty; they forgot, or ignored, or shamefully abused, the idea of unity; and different rival and contentious denominations and organizations arose, based on differences of opinion in regard to the ceremonies of the church, in regard to the modes of organization, in regard to church government, or in regard to some profound question of theology, such as the relation of Predestination and Free Will, and the waste and injury to religion that resulted were immeasurable. In England and America there are still several different denominations of Methodists; and in America, at least, there are several different organizations of Baptists, etc. The absurdity of all of this becomes the more apparent in a town of 1,500 or 2,000 inhabitants—a town composed, say, of equal numbers of Roman Catholics and Protestants—in which one strong, united Roman Catholic Church holds the ground, and one parish priest ministers

to all of his people; and four or five rival, struggling Protestant churches and as many ministers, are in one another's way. All this has arisen from the sinful imperfections of our human nature, as Paul explicitly teaches in his Epistle to the Church at Corinth—the great cosmopolitan city of different races and different classes, and different stages of educational advancement, in which, if anywhere, there might be some excuse for different churches and sects and cults. To these people Paul says, "Whereas there is among you jealousy and strife are ye not carnal, and walk after the manner of men? For when one saith I am of Paul; and another I am of Apollos; are ye not men?" (1 Cor. iii:3-4 R.V.). He means are you not undeveloped, immature men—men who are mere children in the spiritual life? Why, we should like to ask, should differences of opinion in regard to the mode of baptism or the proper subjects for baptism, for instance, render separate and rival religious organizations necessary, provided there is the requisite amount of the essential thing—the love of neighbor and the love of God? Why should a ceremony be the means of dividing the church of God? But how can things be made otherwise? This is the question that many will be disposed to ask. We answer, By simply observing the definite and explicit teaching of the Apostle Paul in Romans, chap. xiv. There was a sharp division in the church in Rome over the question whether it was right or wrong to use animal food, just as important a question to the mind of those people then as the question of the ceremonies, or the question of the historic episcopacy is to many people now. And Paul's definite and explicit teaching was, first, "Let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind" (some right of private judgment is here conceded, we remark); second, on the one hand, avoid all censorious thoughts and

speech, and on the other, avoid all contemptuous or overbearing thoughts and speech (the spirit of mutual toleration is earnestly appealed to here, we observe); and third, dwell together in the spirit of charity and love, in the spirit of self-denial for the sake of weaker brethren and for Christ's sake. Observe what a broad and generous spirit is here appealed to, and what broad and binding principles are here laid down (Rom. xiv:10-13).

We are happy to say that the war is helping to solve this problem also. In the presence of danger and death the essential things loom up and the non-essentials dwindle or disappear, and soldiers on the battle front do not ask if the chaplain is an Anglican or a Nonconformist or a Roman Catholic. The great question is: Has he the Christ spirit; is he a man of God? An excellent article recently appeared in the "Guardian," the paper published in England by the high church section of the established church, and its appearance in that paper makes it the more significant. The writer, a senior chaplain in France, quotes a clergyman, who was formerly of an extreme type, as saying, not invidiously, of course: "The longer I am out here the more I care for Christianity and the less I care for the Church of England." The article closes with these impressive words:

"So, then, you will rejoin, it doesn't matter at all whether a man is a Churchman, a Romanist, a Presbyterian or a Nonconformist—all do equally well, and there is nothing to choose—Churchmanship matters nothing? I am not discussing Churchmanship; I am recording facts. My whole point is that beneath all our serious difficulties there rests a very solid deposit of the faith which has nerved and ennobled our men in this crisis. Upon this foundation we find we have all built. We discover unsuspected identities and sympathies. We almost jostle each other in drawing from the same spiritual rock. We find that what really helps in time of need is not our Churchliness, but our

Christliness, and that the inadequacies or superfluities of ecclesiastical systems are of very small moment if only we belong to the company of the lovers of Jesus Christ."

But great as the foregoing problems really are, urgent as a statesman-like solution of them really is, there is another problem more urgent and perhaps more difficult, a problem not so frequently spoken of as the other two, because it does not appeal so openly to the general mind. We mean the problem of recovering for the present-day churches the fullness of spiritual life and power that prevailed in the churches of the apostles' times. This problem is at the back of all the other problems of our community life; the solution of this would bring the solution of the rest. A great deal of our discourse nowadays is about community service and community saving in view of such conditions as we have just reviewed. Within the last one hundred years Anglo-Saxon civilization has abolished the death penalty for petty theft, has abolished Negro slavery, and other infamous conditions and laws; and on this side of the Atlantic great progress has been made toward the complete abolition of the traffic in intoxicating drink; and all of this is very encouraging and very good. But we must qualify our self-congratulation. This kind of work is a reforming of the outward. It gives to human beings a more favorable and more comfortable environment in which to live and grow, but it is not radical enough. The proclamation of emancipation did not regenerate the Negro race, but some of them did get regenerated and sing the gospel when they were slaves. And the prohibition of the liquor traffic, though desirable, does not make a community devout, Sabbath-observing and spiritually disposed. A man may vote against the liquor traffic and be a thoroughly selfish and unregenerated man. And besides, all of these out-

ward reformations were made possible by great evangelical regenerating movements that went before, and leavened the masses in the lower strata of society, and created a sentiment favorable to social reform. The work of John Wesley and his helpers prepared the way for William Wilberforce and his work of emancipating Negro slaves in British realms. The reformations mentioned, and the reformations prospective, are outward, we repeat. But when Christ comes He will go to the heart of things. "He will lay the axe to the root of the tree" as the forerunner said.

What could the early church have done for the amelioration of social conditions if it had proceeded according to modern ideas of a social regeneration or reconstruction of the state? Suppose the apostles had sent a delegation to make representations to the government at Rome, and to appeal for the abolition of slavery, or for the relief of people otherwise oppressed? But we cannot suppose such a thing. It would have been unthinkable and absurd. Such a delegation would have been treated as insane, or else they would have been executed or sent to prison by the authorities at Rome. What then could the churches and the apostles do? They sought and obtained a spiritual endowment that transformed them from weakness to power, from wavering fear to invincible faith; and with this endowment they went to the multitudes to regenerate and heal and teach them. "Stephen was a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost," "Barnabas was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost." And before sending Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary tour, the church at Antioch fasted and prayed along with them till they received special spiritual qualifications; and these men were "sent forth by the Holy Ghost" (Acts xiii:1-3). Then "Paul, filled with the Holy Ghost" said to Elymas the sorcerer, etc. (Acts

xiii:9-10). The apostles had to flee for their lives from Antioch in Pisidia, and the disciples who were left, despised or pitied by the world, "were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost." Expressions like these occur again and again in the records of the early church's life and work. And thus, without academic learning, except in a very few cases; without social prestige or political favor; without the patronage of the noble or the great; without show of military force, such as Mohammed afterward used to propagate his religion; in face of bitter opposition and persecution from the Jewish authorities at first, and of Roman authorities later on—they testified and taught and preached till, in thirty-five years, there were flourishing churches in Asia Minor, Macedonia, Greece and Rome; and Christian communities were to be found along the northern part of Africa, and in the islands of the Mediterranean Sea. And the spiritual enduement was the secret of the miraculous growth; AND THE SPIRITUAL ENDUEMENT IS JUST AS INDISPENSABLE TO-DAY.* In conditions of ease or affluence the drift of human nature is ever toward the evanescent, deceptive, perishable things of the present world; to the pleasures of self-indulgence, self-interest and self-idolatry; or, as John expresses it, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life"—the elements that enter into the worldly life. In religion the drift is ever toward legalism or formality or ceremonialism. But Christ, on the higher side of life, is forever calling people up to the spiritual through the way of repentance, self-denial, obedience and faith. He is saying to all, "Except a man be born of

*The reader will find in the Appendix a famous prediction by John Wesley on the influence which the acquisition of wealth would have on the spiritual life of "the people called Methodists." (See NOTE H.)

water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." And He is saying to disciples, "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem [that is to say, in your own community or neighborhood], till ye be endued with power from on high."

The obtaining of this spiritual enduement does not depend so much as some suppose, on being in harmony with certain traditional, orthodox standards, or with certain denominational peculiarities. It does not depend on the question whether, in baptism, the individual was sprinkled or immersed, or on whether, if a clergyman, he was ordained according to Episcopal or non-Episcopal modes. Adoniram Judson had it, and was a Baptist. Dwight L. Moody had it, and was a Congregationalist, Peter the Apostle had it, and much of his thinking was the thinking of a Jew. Bernard of Clairvaux had it, and his thinking was that of a mediæval Roman Catholic monk. Catherine of Siena had it, and she thought as a mediæval Italian saint; and that other Catherine, the wife of General Booth, had it, and she thought as a modern Christian Englishwoman. John Wesley had it, and favored the Arminian theology. Jonathan Edwards had it, and was a staunch advocate of the Calvinistic view. The obtaining of this enduement depends on something deeper and more important than these peculiarities of doctrine. It is never given except on certain other fixed and inexorable conditions, namely, the absolute renunciation of the worldly life, and the complete surrender of oneself to the will of God. This means the giving up of much that might be considered legitimate ambition—for instance ambition for eminence, or ambition for position. It means the renunciation of material wealth, the obedient acceptance of Christ's teachings on stewardship. For, as Wendt says (if it be not an invidious thing to quote

a German scholar now)—Wendt, the great scholar, whose work on the "Teaching of Jesus" is the greatest in existence, says, "Jesus made the renunciation of wealth a condition of entrance into His Kingdom, co-ordinate with repentance and faith." And this self-renunciation means the consecration of oneself to a life of service in Jesus' name, on His plan, and for the sake of His Kingdom among our fellowmen.

Perhaps some may be now disposed to ask if we think that Christ's coming is not very far off. And we reply that it may be much nearer than many persons even dream of. We believe that devout, prayerful premillennialists are right when they teach that we ought to be living every day watchfully and prayerfully, as if Christ might come to-night or on the morrow. This is the essential point, anyhow, of His words "Be ye also ready for in an hour that ye think not the Son of Man cometh" (Matt. xxiv:44). And the signs of the present time, to the discerning, are not difficult to read. We are in such times as our Lord warned about. "Take heed to yourselves, lest haply your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life and that day come on you suddenly as a snare; for so shall it come on all them that I will on the face of all the earth. But watch ye in every season, making supplication," etc. (Luke xxi:34-36). The worldly spirit is insidious, subversive and prevalent everywhere: the prayer services and meetings for spiritual fellowship have dwindled, questionable or baneful diversions attract the majority, the automobile traffic on God's holy day is unjustifiably large, Sunday religious services in many places are sparsely attended, and places of pleasure resort are thronged.

And there are other signs. Society is confused—even good people are sometimes confused—by glaring, misleading religious lights; in other words, numbers of misleading

sects are busy propagating their erroneous or mischievous views. Among these we have already mentioned the Russellites, followers of Charles T. Russell, who make a great parade of their loyalty to the Bible, and their study of Bible prophecy, who closely follow certain traditional views, and certain other views of Pastor Russell's own. And there are the Christian Scientists, who regard Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy as the great light of the present age. The phenomenal growth of this sect is due to one great truth that its teachings contain, namely, the truth that our mental and spiritual conditions have an immeasurable influence on our bodily health. But Mrs. Eddy's writings, so far as we remember, contain no teaching on one great fundamental gospel requirement, they never insist that human beings must repent of their sins in order to be saved. Mrs. Eddy is quite consistent with herself in this omission; for, according to her view, sin, evil and disease are mere negations or unrealities. There is no such a thing as sin or evil or disease, so she says; these are only "errors of mortal mind."

And there are the Latter Day Saints, as they call themselves in Canada; in the state of Utah where their headquarters are, they bear the name of Mormons. Their teachings originated with one named Joseph Smith, born in Vermont, 1805, of a family with an unstable, restless disposition, and disposed more or less to religious superstition. He was a man with a shady reputation in regard to his relations with women; and was the subject of hallucinations and visions; and was possessed of a certain enthusiasm for religion. Not being controlled by very strong moral scruples, he was guilty of a fraudulent translation of "some ancient records" that had come into his hands "from the catacombs of Egypt, the writings of Abraham while he was in Egypt, called the Book of Abraham, written by his own

hand upon papyrus." Modern men of science have translated these records, and proved that they are prayers to the Egyptian Sun God, and contain no reference to Abraham in Egypt at all. With its erroneous teaching thus exposed, this sect is still actively proselyting. And it teaches prominently "remission by immersion," which means salvation by ceremony, which is a relic of heathenism. For, as George Adam Smith says, "when one is asked "What is the distinguishing characteristic of heathenism? one is always ready to say Idolatry, which is not true. The distinguishing characteristic of heathenism is the stress which it lays upon ceremonial. To pagan religions . . . rites are the indispensable element in religion." This sect is a great religious, political organization, and controls several of the Western States.

And there are the Seventh Day Adventists, whose religion is a form of legalism, or an outgrowth of the legalistic spirit, the spirit that magnifies the subordinate too much. Even if their peculiar views could be proved to be founded on fact—which they cannot—it might be doubtful if all other Christians would be required to go back to the old Jewish Sabbath for all the difference that the change would make. These people are busy, unsettling all they can and hindering the observance of the Day of Rest recognized by the vast majority of Christian people, and by the civil authorities in civilized nations.

Some well-meaning people have been drawn into sects* and errors like the foregoing. Such sects thrive in times when the spiritual life in older religious organizations has run low, and when a Divine visitation is drawing near. This is what our Lord means when He warns His disciples that there would be false Christs and false prophets at such times (Matt. xxiv :23-26).

In other words there would be people who would be saying "The churches are all wrong. Our leader gives the only true Bible interpretation and teaching," or "Our leader represents the real Christianity of Christ." And if they shall say "Behold he is in the desert or behold he is in the secret chambers" "go not after them," or "believe it not" (Luke xvii:23). This is our Lord's way of saying that we are to pay no heed to the leaders or agents or followers of these self-assured, over-zealous and proselyting sects.

We speak at times of the cycles of history. We mean that, in spite of unforeseen and unthought of factors and contingencies that do appear at times, in spite of all appearances to the contrary, human history moves through great periods with a certain degree of regularity; and this regularity of movement constitutes a basis for prediction, so that prophecy, to the spiritually endued, is a very rational thing; and persons thus endued can, in a degree, calculate the fortunes of humanity that will become history later on. And our Lord reproached the Pharisees for not being able to understand "the signs of the times." He assumes that THEY OUGHT to have been able. If they had been spiritually endued THEY WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO DISCERN. For the movements of history are like the movements of the planets. Each planet is moving around the central sun in an orbit of its own; but it is said that beside this there is another movement. From certain phenomena astronomers surmise that the sun, moon and planets are moving all together straight onward into the infinitudes of space. And just so human history is forever moving in circles according to these universal laws given in the words of Christ in His discourses and parables about His coming again. But at the same time, human history is forever moving onward to that glorious consummation foreseen by Isaiah in which

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"the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." And as the closing part of each period comes around certain signs appear that are similar to those that appeared in the closing part of other periods that are past. Thus, as we have already seen, we have just such glaring, misleading lights, and just such activities of false prophets and false Christs at the present time, as our Lord warned His disciples would appear before the coming that would take place before all of His own generation would pass away. And for reasons like these, we believe that Christ is coming before long; and that a new era will soon dawn for the human race.

And we rejoice in this expectation and belief. For the forces of wickedness and mammon, of pride and fashion, of unbelief and irreligion, are too great for us. We cannot overcome with our present strength. We need a mighty reinforcement of spiritual life and power, a new manifestation of the miraculous, a new revealing of the Son of Man. May it come soon! Amen and Amen! "Even so come, Lord Jesus!" Many eyes are weary with watching and waiting for the dawning of the new day. Hope, often disappointed and deferred, has caused some to faint through discouragement and doubt. May their faith fail not when the hour of deliverance is near, and "the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand," "For He is faithful that has promised." He declares Himself to be "the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the Beginning of the creation of God" (Rev. iii:14). His plans will not miscarry; His emphatic assurance still abides, "Heaven and earth shall pass away but my word shall not pass away" (Matt. xxiv:35). "Yet a little while and He that shall come, will come and will not tarry" (Hebrews x:37). "I will not leave you orphans" or desolate, "I come to you" (John xiv:18, see R.V. and Margin).

APPENDIX.

NOTE A.—MARTIN LUTHER.

In these extracts from his writings we get a look into the very heart of Martin Luther. We see his humanness, his originality, his courage, his faith, his love and loyalty to the Holy Scriptures as the revelation of God's will and of His truth. But we shall give other estimates of him. Thomas Carlyle, the Scotch philosopher and historian, with true spiritual insight says of him, that he is one of our most precious and lovable men; so great, so simple, so unpretending, so unostentatious in his greatness, "there for quite another purpose than for being great." Carlyle further supposes that the history of large portions of Europe and America would have been altogether different if this one man had not lived and wrought.

The late Professor Goldwin Smith, a somewhat sceptical and critical thinker, gives his estimate of Luther and his work in the following lines :

"Trumpet of Truth, at whose soul-piercing sound,
That fabric vast of Falsehood, guarded well
By superstition's immemorial spell
For twice five hundred years, went to the ground—
Mighty Deliverer, to whom nations bound
In dungeons dark of Papal slavery
Owe it that light is theirs and faith is free—
Luther whose name four centuries have crowned
With grateful praises—in thy dauntless heart,
Which Hell's embattled powers could never move,
Through the fierce strife there still was left a part
For gentle thoughts, for music, beauty, love.
Now, let the voice which thundered doom to Rome,
Breathe peace to rent and war-worn Christendom."

A somewhat different estimate of Luther and his work is given in a recent work by Professor Henry C. Vedder on the Reformation. This author also gives a fuller statement of the conditions in which Luther lived, and which contributed to make the Great Reformation a success. We give below Professor Vedder's own words and some of his reviewers' remarks:

"As with every man of genius, there is something in Luther that does not yield to analysis—the whole is greater than the sum of all its parts. Not a great scholar, not a great poet, not a great orator, hardly a great man of letters, he was a great man—he was the great man of the German people."

"In these words the author sums up the attainments of its chief protagonist. Prof. Vedder does not pretend that Luther was the Reformation, or that the cleansing of religion in Germany from age-long abuses would not have come about inevitably had Luther taken no part in the movement. The real cause of the German revolt from the Papacy was economic and political, and the religious aspect given to it by the initial quarrel about indulgences was merely accidental. 'The revolt would have occurred had Martin Luther never lived. For we have outgrown Carlyle's specious one-man theory of history, and no longer believe that the story of human progress is nothing more than the biography of a few great men. The old notion that Luther made the Reformation is probably not held to-day by any person of average intelligence. At most he only led and directed a movement that was inevitable. Germany was a powder mine, ready to be exploded by a spark, and a spark was morally certain to come soon from some quarter. As it fell out, Luther's theses were the spark, and nobody in all Europe, except, perhaps, the Pope, was more surprised than Luther himself by the violence of the resulting explosion.'

"Taught Nothing New."

"It will be seen from this that it is not as a hero-worshipper Prof. Vedder, after a careful study of the proceeds of a whole generation of original research, puts into form his conclusions as to the underlying causes of the Reformation. Luther, he tells us in a masterly introductory summary, taught nothing new. His doctrine was not new even in Germany. A generation earlier John of Wesel had attacked

indulgences, and had taught justification by faith in Luther's own university, with equal boldness and superior learning. Wiclif in England, Hus in Bohemia, and Savonarola in Italy had fully realized the corruptions of the Roman Church, and denounced them with a vigor that Luther never exceeded.

"His success where his predecessors failed Prof. Vedder believes to have been due to the fact that when he came with his message the art of printing, recently invented, enabled the people everywhere to follow the controversy that it aroused. Without the printing press the German Reformation could not have occurred.

"Economic Forces at Work.

"There were also great economic forces at work making for upheaval. The burghers of the cities, and especially those of the merchant class, needed capital for their enterprises, and saw with grim distaste the concentration of a large part of the nation's wealth in the hands of the churchmen, who withdrew it from production to build huge ecclesiastical structures. The German princes, too, were jealous of the intrusion of Italians in purely national affairs. The feeling against Rome was thus at fever heat when the first protest against the abuse of indulgences was uttered by Luther. Germans of all classes were ripe for revolt, longing for a champion and a mouthpiece.

"This view is buttressed by many facts inaccessible to the earlier historians of the Reformation, who made Luther the pivot on which all hinged. Prof. Vedder's work will be the subject of much controversy, and he may expect sharp criticism from the thick-and-thin followers of the great reformer, but his conclusions will not be lightly disposed of. Luther was the soul of the revolt, but the revolt was inevitable."

We have given the foregoing statements from the review of Luther's work because we desire to be entirely fair to those who hold a less favorable view of him, or who may be disposed somewhat to minimize the importance of his life and work; but we still hold firmly to the view of him which we have assumed in the Chapter on the Ten Virgins. It is true that Luther "did not make the Reformation," and that the social, religious and political conditions

of the time were essential to his success; but something similar to this might be said of every other great man. It might be said of Shakespeare himself. In the century before Shakespeare's time the great intellectual awakening, commonly called the Renaissance (or the New Learning), had come to Western Europe, and the influence of the great Puritan Revival had pervaded the whole of England, it had pervaded most thoroughly the county of Warwick, in which Shakespeare had grown up; again, other able dramatic writers had appeared in England not long before his day, and he had the advantage of the study of their works in his early years. But facts like these do not lessen our appreciation of Shakespeare's intellectual powers. And our knowledge of the conditions into which Luther was born should not affect our appreciation of his endowments or his courage or his work. It was an evidence of genius that he was able to see directly into these conditions and their meaning *in his own day*; that he could see them in their true proportions; and it was the highest proof of the heroic that he acted faithfully and unselfishly on the vision that he had.

It is also true that there were others who immediately before him, or at the time, were teaching substantially the same views; but in many cases it was in a quiet, unobtrusive, unheroic way (like that of Erasmus, the scholar): in a way that brought them no persecution, and aroused on the other side no uneasiness or alarm. But in Luther's act of nailing the theses on the church door at Wittenberg there was a conspicuousness, and ingenuousness; an unaffected moral heroism; there was an innocent and unostentatious recklessness of consequences that aroused a spontaneous moral enthusiasm in the general multitude, and that created an immediate and intense alarm in the lapsed and unspiritual church. This it is that makes Luther such a

conspicuous hero with us; that has won him to our hearts; and that has made us so slow to recognize and acknowledge his really serious faults; and has made us, moreover, so ready to forgive.

NOTE B.—HENRY WARD BEECHER.

The following testimonial to Henry Ward Beecher is from Rev. J. O. Peck, one of the most deeply-spiritual preachers and most successful evangelist pastors of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States in the latter part of the last century:

"As a Christian, Mr. Beecher perplexes many who know him only by reputation. The current conviction in some quarters, that he is theologically oblique; the occasional overplay of wit and pleasantry in the pulpit; the apparent lack of seriousness and reverence for the traditional solemnity of the preacher's function which shocks some people; the applause and laughter which sometimes greet his bursts of eloquent indignation or appeal, have created an impression in some minds that he is not a spiritual man. My personal association with him in the later years of his ministry compel me to testify to the conviction of *his deep spirituality. His ordinary prayers before sermon are the most extraordinary evidences of real intimate communion with God.* He seems talking with God face to face, not as a pleading mendicant, but as a conscious and acknowledged son. And I know (how, I need not say) that his public prayers are but the reflection of his sincere abiding communion with God in private life. Never will the members of the Brooklyn Clerical Union forget a "conversation" he gave us, by request, in May, 1880, on the relation of private to public prayer in a minister's life. As he spoke of his personal experience and of how he cultivated and fed his spiritual life, we all felt that the speaker was one who dwelt in the Holy of Holies in rich, blessed communion with God. When asked if those remarkable public prayers were prepared or studied beforehand, he replied, 'No! I never know a word I shall utter. All true prayer is an inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes I have a consciousness of great sympathy with men in their burdens, sorrows, and struggles. Then, I shall be likely to be led to pray in that direction. At other times, I am full of

thoughts of the dear ones who have left us, and then I shall probably pray about heaven. That is the only hint I have of what my prayers may be. Real prayer, I repeat, is an inspiration.' I may here sum up by saying that my conviction, as the result of personal intercourse and thoughtful study of his writings, is, that *Mr. Beecher is a man of real deep spirituality*. Perfect in life he is not; for he has his share of faults, and has made his share of mistakes, and has sinned his share of transgressions, but that he has sought to live sincerely to the glory of God and labor earnestly for the good of man, I fully believe. An honest Christian, but not faultless, I believe he is, and has always striven to be. A man dear to God, and to whom God is inexpressibly and savingly precious, is my conviction of Henry Ward Beecher as a Christian man.

"As a Preacher, I hesitate not to say that, in my opinion, Henry Ward Beecher is the greatest preacher in the world to-day, and is one of the score of greatest preachers in all history. Other men have excelled him in single points of strength. As a theological preacher I should not rank him high. In the severely logical line of preaching he is not pre-eminent. He does not aim at that kind of sermonizing. In evangelistic preaching he is not to be compared with George Whitefield. However, Whitefield's printed sermons are not to be compared with Mr. Beecher's discourses. The former are not remarkable, while the latter are sparkling and fresh as a May morning, at the same time that they are vigorous as mountain breezes. Mr. Beecher is a great teacher, more than simply a great orator, in the pulpit. He is a natural orator, but oratory is subordinated to teaching. He aims to build up Christian manhood. Men must be educated by religious truth, and this demands an inspiring teacher. His thought is not crude, but refined. What he reads he assimilates, so that everything he utters seems as original as if no one else had ever discovered the same thought. He has borrowed little from books, and his sermons are evolved from his own fertile brain. He reads much, but digests all. His sermons are pre-eminently practical. His object being to build men up in a large, broad, many-sided manhood, all his sermons and lecture-room talks are for use in daily life. His sermons are meant for service, and not for exhibition. Metaphysical in subtle unfolding of truth, lightning-like in vividness of portrayal, picturesque and grand in illustration, pathetic or thrilling in application, eloquent and swaying in the power of utterance, he is the greatest preacher that America has ever produced. His influence has been large, outside of Plymouth

Church, on the ministry and educated minds of the generation. All will not appreciate that influence at the same value. It has stimulated intellect to think independently; it has worked to produce a larger catholicity; it has glorified the fatherhood of God and exalted the brotherhood of man. For greatness, brilliancy, and resources of pulpit power he is unequalled.

"As a Lecturer, discussing political, social, and educational questions before the large constituency of the platform, to be repeated by the press, he has wielded a vast and salutary influence in moulding the thought of his age. His popularity and power on the platform have been very great, but have never equalled, much less eclipsed, his popularity and power in the pulpit. He has been a moral force in our civilization.

"As a Patriot, he has engraven himself for immortality in American history. He has plead for the poor, the oppressed, and the despised, with more eloquence than he would have plead for his own life at the stake. He began his ministry with espousing the cause of the slave, when to be an abolitionist was to be execrated. He continued that devotion through storm and obloquy till the last fetter was broken, and the last chattel was an enfranchised citizen of the Republic. In the galaxy of illustrious philanthropists his name shines conspicuously. The wrongs of the African, the Indian, and the Mongolian, injustice to woman and the laboring classes, national intelligence, equal rights for all men, and the great cause of temperance, have always evoked his eloquent voice and pen. The service of humanity and his country with him has been the service of God. The distinguished ability and grand effectiveness with which he served the cause of the Union during the Rebellion, by his impassioned loyalty at home, and with which he even more gloriously defended the undivided Republic before scowling and howling disunion sympathizers in Great Britain, entitle him to the everlasting gratitude of America. Not still the last African face has disappeared from American society—not till the memory of our struggle for an undivided Republic fades out of history—not till the ingratitude of an effete and decaying nation consigns the loyalty and heroism of her noblest patriots to oblivion—will the sturdy and chivalric patriotism of Mr. Beecher be forgotten! As an inspiring force in the history of the Republic his fame is assured. When we review his great qualities of manhood, eloquent on the platform, peerless in the pulpit, Christ-like in philanthropy, Roman in his patriotism, we are forced to exclaim, 'One of the few immortal names, that were

not born to die.' He is loved almost to idolatry, and eulogized almost to apotheosis by hosts of ardent friends. Of course he has not escaped the poisoned shafts of foes; but, like the now revered and sainted Dr. Payson and Archbishop Fenelon, whom the hounds bayed at while living, but whose sweet fame by Divine providence is a sacred depositum of humanity and history, when his foes are forgotten, the name of Henry Ward Beecher will shine as the stars for ever and ever!

“‘Nothing need cover his high fame but heaven;
No pyramids set off his memories;
But the eternal substance of his greatness,
To WHICH I LEAVE HIM.’”

The following is an estimate of Henry Ward Beecher from the pen of Rev. George Douglas, an eminent Canadian Methodist minister, who was not only a most eloquent preacher but a deeply spiritual man:

“The colossal grandeur of Mr. Beecher's endowment and character is such that I feel utterly inadequate to pen anything worthy of his peerless powers. Nearly thirty years have come and gone since I first heard him on a bright autumnal morning. That discourse on ‘The Trial of Faith’ was to me a new revelation, and is as fresh in my memory, while I dictate this, as the hour I heard it. For more than twenty years I read his discourses in *The Independent* and elsewhere. I have been obliged to study the history of the pulpit from the post-apostolic, patristic, and mediaeval ages downward, and I declare my solemn conviction, a conviction which I constantly affirm, that the ages have never produced a man so marvelously endowed as Mr. Beecher. I hold that he unveils the character of God, expounds the principles of his government in its material and ethical relations, propounds the philosophy of human life with an original power that I, at least, cannot find elsewhere in literature; while his perennial power of illustration, which springs from his mind fresh and clear as the crystal fountain, with the undertone of reverential regard and pervading unction, makes him a preacher without an equal in the past or a compeer in the present. The pregnant future holds many a surprise, but I greatly doubt if a man, take him all in all, will be found in the pulpit so regally endowed for a thousand years to come.”

The following paragraph is from Rev. Dr. Joseph Parker of City Temple, London, England:

"Every now and then we hear that Mr. Beecher has changed his theological position, or that he has modified his faith, or that he has been struck down on the road to Damascus and seen a new glory which must be typified in new words. Let no man be misled by such gossip. Mr. Beecher can never be other than orthodox. A heart like his does not know how to be heretical. Like all persons whom it is not in the power of time to make *old*, he is always seeing a new specimen of butterflies, a new instance in botany, a new tone of color in the morning or evening sky; he is always coming home with a new incident, a fresh idea, or a bold proposition; but knowing that he sees everything through his imagination, or passes everything through the zone of his affections, and that in his nature there is neither suspicion nor resentment, we may be perfectly sure that at the last as at the first, Mr. Beecher will be found at the Cross, saying, as few others can say, that there is no name given under heaven among men, but Christ's only, whereby men can be saved."*

NOTE C.—JOHN CALVIN.

As a rule people who have been brought up outside of Calvinistic communions utterly fail to appreciate the worth and work of this marvelous, providential man. They have never properly estimated the greatness of his endowments; they have no adequate conception of the extent of his influence for good in mankind. He was born in Noyon, seventy miles northeast of Paris (in the region of country that has recently been devastated by the war) in the year 1509. In his early years he was sent by his father to Paris to be educated for the office of a priest in the Roman Catholic Church. But the natural bent of his mind, and the atmosphere prevailing in the church turned him, before long, to the study of law. In 1532, however, he had a sudden con-

* The foregoing testimonials to Henry Ward Beecher were selected from a "Life of Beecher" by Abbott and Halliday.

version—a conversion as radical and permanent as that which changed the persecuting Saul of Tarsus into the foremost missionary of Christ. The great Protestant Reformation was then in its earlier stages, and Calvin had the spiritual insight to recognize that it was of God; and he cast his lot in with it; and became a devoted and self-renouncing advocate of the cause. Before a large assembly in Paris, on All Saints' Day in the year 1533, he gave an address in favor of the movement; and for this act of moral heroism and loyalty to conviction, he had to flee for his life, first from Paris, and two or three years later, from his native land. And his moral heroism was shown in another, and, possibly, more trying way. He was of medium height, of a spare and emaciated frame, hampered by feeble health, tasting but little of life's natural joys; and had to struggle more or less to the end of his days with physical weakness and pain.

His intellectual powers were gigantic, and his mental activity incessant and intense. At the age of twenty-six he had produced his great work, entitled "The Institutes of the Christian Religion," which has been called "the Master-piece of Protestantism." In the Preface to this great work he addressed King Francis I., who had been taking active measures to overthrow the rising spirit of the new movement in France. The language of Calvin's remonstrance and appeal was earnest and passionate, and rose, at times, to the height of powerful and soul-moving eloquence. Calvin's "Commentaries on the Scriptures" also evince the masterly, well-balanced intellectual endowments of the man.

He was not largely endowed with those social, genial human qualities which made Luther a popular hero and favorite. He was of a shrinking temperament, naturally sensitive, diffident, studious and reserved, but he was loved

by the intimate friends who knew him best; he was a man of vast generic human sympathies, and was never swayed by selfish or petty aims.

The Sovereignty of God and the doctrine of Predestination were very prominent in his thoughts and in his works, and it was natural that such should be the case. Some people are so constituted that that they see only the sombre aspects of life, and for such people there is enough of the sombre and the tragical to be seen in a world like ours; others seem born with the propensity to see the ludicrous aspects of things, and for them (and they are to be envied) the world abounds in ludicrous and mirth-provoking situations. But Calvin, the former student of the law, was so constituted that everywhere he saw the evidences of divine sovereignty, and of the reign of divinely ordained and immutable law; he saw it in nature, in history, and in individual life, and he considered it to be man's supreme duty to be submissive to it. His teachings do not abound, like Beecher's, in illustrations of God's fatherhood and love. Probably it was better for his generation to see much of the sterner and severer view.

In the great religious revival of the eighteenth century under the leadership of John Wesley, a very strong reaction set in against some of the extreme statements and perversions of John Calvin's views. This reaction was intensified by the fact that John Wesley and his preachers dwelt much on the mercy and universal grace of God. And this reaction probably went too far, as reactions are liable to do. But we must remember that Predestination is prominent in the Holy Scriptures, both of the Old Testament and the New. One of the greatest of Hebrew scholars* states that

* Evald in "Die Lehre der Bibel von Gott" (The Teaching of the Bible from God).

the belief in Predestination "was a powerful lever in Hebrew prophecy."

We see an example of this in the writings of Isaiah. Sennacherib, the vain-glorious and victorious Emperor of Assyria, after subduing and utterly ravaging nation after nation, sent an arrogant message to the God-fearing Hezekiah, king of Judah, threatening his kingdom and Jerusalem with a similar fate. He had been saying "With the multitude of my chariots I am come up to the height of the mountains, to the innermost parts of Lebanon; and I will cut down the tall cedars thereof, and the choice fir trees thereof, and I will enter into its farthest height, the forest of its fruitful field. I have digged and drunk water, and with the sole of my feet will I dry up all the rivers of Egypt" (Isaiah xxxvii:24-25 American R.V.). But Isaiah informs him that God had foreordained his work (doubtless as a punishment or chastisement for the crimes and abominations of the nations he had subdued); and God had set his limits and would bring him to an inglorious end. "Hast thou not heard how I [Jehovah the God of Hezekiah] have done it long ago, and formed it of ancient times? Now I have brought it to pass that it should be thine to lay waste fortified cities into ruinous heaps. Therefore their inhabitants were of small power. But I know thy sitting down, and thy going out, and thy coming in and thy raging against me. . . . Therefore I will I put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest" (Isaiah xxxvii:26-29 American R.V.).

We have another instance of this belief in Predestination in the writings of Jeremiah. In telling of his call to the prophetic office Jeremiah informs us that before his birth God had known him and sanctified him; and ordained him

to be a prophet unto the nations; that he should pluck up and break down and destroy and overthrow and build and plant, according to God's immutable counsel and plan (Jere. i:1-10). And we have this doctrine of Predestination also in the teachings of Jesus. Looking forward, as He did, to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman power, He informed His disciples beforehand that a time of affliction and woe and desolation was coming such as had never been known before on earth, and its equal in intensity of horror and anguish would never be known on earth again. "And except the Lord had shortened the days no flesh would have been saved; but for the elect's sake, whom He chose, He shortened the days" (Mark xiii:20 R.V.). In God's infinitely wise and benevolent plan events had already been arranged.

And this doctrine of Predestination is prominent also in the writings of St. Paul. We see it in the eighth, ninth, tenth and eleventh chapters of the Epistle to the Romans; and in the Epistle to the Ephesians he says that "God chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before Him in love; having foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto Himself according to the good pleasure of His will" (Ephes. i:4-5 R.V.).

And this Calvinistic teaching has been the faith of many strong men of modern times. It nerved William of Orange, the hero of Holland (1533-84 A.D.), and Oliver Cromwell and his Ironsides in the struggles of their day; and it has sustained Scottish missionaries, like John G. Paton and George L. Mackay, in lonely labors in far-off islands of the sea. As Milman says, "he who is not predestined, who does not declare, who does not believe himself predestinated as the author of a great religious movement, he in whom

God is not manifestly, sensibly, avowedly working out His pre-established designs, will never be reformer or saint.”*

Of course there is the co-related truth of the moral responsibility of man. That truth is taken for granted every time men are called on, in the Scriptures, to repent and turn away from sin. There must be in men some inherent moral freedom, however limited that freedom may be, either to respond to the call or to resist it; else men would not be approved for responding and obeying, or blamed and condemned for resisting and hardening their hearts. It is true that none can rise out of the natural state into the spiritual life by inherent strength alone; the best of men are dependent on the grace that comes from above; but that grace is universal: “The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal” (1 Cor. xii:7); “And the grace of God hath appeared to all men bringing salvation, instructing us,” etc. (see Titus ii:11, in the margin), “And Jesus Christ is the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world” (John i:9). It is possible to so emphasize the doctrine of Predestination as to overshadow and obscure these truths of man’s responsibility and of God’s universal grace. These doctrines (God’s predestination and man’s responsibility) constitute two hemispheres of religious truth; and if we look wholly at the one, or wholly at the other, we obtain a false view. At one time one of these doctrines has been emphasized too much, at another time the other has been emphasized too much; and the difference in emphases has been the occasion of the prolonged, and, sometimes, bitter controversies that have arisen over these profound and difficult doctrines of God’s purpose and God’s grace.

* “History of Latin Christianity,” p. 112.

The life and work of John Calvin were a remarkable fulfillment of the assurance sent to the church in Thyatira, by the messenger from Patmos Isle, "He that overcometh, and that keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give authority over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to shivers" (Rev. ii:26-27). Will the reader indulge us in a somewhat lengthy explanation of the statement just made? After Calvin was compelled to leave his native France, he went to Geneva, Switzerland, and became established there. In that centre he exercised his wonderful gifts for organization and discipline in maintaining the strictest order and the severest morality in that city. He also continued teaching the doctrines of the Reformation, his fame extending throughout the civilized portions of Europe, and students came to him from every part. Among these came John Knox of Scotland, and found "the greatest school of Christ since the apostles' time." And thus the influence of Calvin widened immeasurably with the years. Moreover, beside his convictions on the doctrine of Predestination, he had deep convictions also on the question of the true relations of the clergy and the laity. He held that in the presence of God they were of equal standing; he ignored all priestly functions and stripped the clergy of all sacerdotal privileges and power. Nothing but superior mental, moral and spiritual endowments counted with him.

Again, his aversion to absolutism in church authority, and to autocracy as a form of government for the state, was very deep and very pronounced. Having a lofty conception of the worth and dignity of the individual man, he believed in his right to a voice in the government of the state; hence he strongly favored the constitutional form of government. His students carried his teachings back to

their various countries. The people of Holland and the Puritans of England, and the people of Scotland, especially, became permeated by the spirit and the thoughts of the great reformer at Geneva. Puritanism "saved Scotland," says John R. Green in his *Short History*, "from a civil and religious despotism, and in saving the liberty of Scotland, it saved English liberty as well."

In the latter part of the sixteenth century Spain was the greatest and most resourceful nation in Europe, and the most intense in its loyalty to the Papal authority and to the Roman Catholic religion. And the King of Spain sent his great fleet (the Spanish Armada) to whip Puritan England back to the Roman Catholic Church; but, as every schoolboy knows, the expedition resulted in utter disaster; and the King of Spain sent his armies against Holland; but the heroic Dutch, under the leadership of William of Orange (sometime called William the Silent), baffled them, and these Spanish expeditions resulted in failure, too; and from that time the power of Spain began to decline and to decay. Thus the military power of Spain was foiled by Calvinistic Holland; and the Spanish Armada was subdued by the seamen of Puritan England, assisted, of course, by shipwrecking storms of Providence. In other words both the military and the naval power of Spain were shattered against "the Genevan rock." They were broken by the nations which John Calvin's teachings had helped so largely to make great; and the promise given in Rev. ii:26-27 was remarkably and memorably fulfilled.

John Calvin has been much reproached on account of his relations with the heretic Servetus. It is one of the unamiable characteristics of our human nature that we often magnify a good man's one fault or error more than we magnify a dozen of his meritorious excellencies or achievements.

Calvin certainly gave his consent to the death of Servetus as a punishment for what he considered to be dangerous and contaminating heresy in that man. And Calvin was to blame for this. But we are lenient with King David for having a dozen wives. We say that the moral standards of his age were low, and that David was not out of harmony with those standards except in his wrong relations with Bathsheba and her husband. And we overlook the fault of George Whitefield, the great evangelist, in possessing a number of Negro slaves. We say that the moral education of the Anglo-Saxon race had not advanced far enough at that time to enable all good men to see that Negro slavery was wrong. Why should we not be lenient and forgive John Calvin in a similar spirit? Persecution and even the death penalty was not considered wrong by the religious among Catholics or Protestants in those days, and John Calvin had not yet fully outgrown the spirit and the standards of his time. His advances from the period of his early years were immense. He outgrew a vast amount of erroneous tradition. Let us pardon him if he did not outgrow everything that was imperfect in the religious order in which he grew up.

NOTE D.—DR. FRANZ DELITZSCH.

Dr. Franz Delitzsch was a deeply spiritual and truly regenerated man. He left on record, in a final address, a beautiful testimony of his conversion and his experience of evangelical religion. We may judge that he was not a reckless, irreverent, destructive critic from the assurance of Dr. Cunningham Geikie who dedicated Vol. V. of his "Hours with the Bible" to him in the following glowing words:—"To my greatly honored friend Doctor Franz Delitzsch, Professor of Theology in the University of Leipsic; Privy

Counsellor of the Kingdom of Saxony, etc., etc., etc. The faithful confessor of Christ by his life and writings: the one, showing what is meant by a steadfast imitation of the Great Exemplar: the other, how the widest culture and the profoundest attainments may be laid, in childlike love, at the foot of the cross."

We may add that Dr. Cunningham Geikie had such scant sympathy with modern criticism that he speaks of "the wild and startling views" of Dr. Robertson Smith, one of the leading critics of a generation ago, who was deposed from his position in one of the universities of Scotland on account of advanced views. Hence the above admission of the late date of the Book of Daniel is from one who leaned to traditional and conservative views, and who was not disposed to advance till evidence compelled.

NOTE E.—PREMILLENNIALISM.

The following argument against the premillennial view was written by Rev. Thomas L. Wilkinson, an able minister of the Canadian Methodist Church. It appeared in the "Christian Guardian" of Toronto in the issue of Sept. 27th, 1916:

"In Acts ii:34-35 we read, as the words of the Father, God, spoken to the Son, presumably upon His ascension to the Father after His resurrection, 'Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool.' These words are found in several other passages. A reference Bible will indicate the places. In 1 Cor. xv:25 Paul says, 'He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet.' Now it is manifest that the putting of His enemies under His feet and making them His footstool signify the same thing. If so, then both His reigning and sitting at the Father's right hand must end at the same time, as His enemies are not likely to be put under His feet twice and at two different times. And it is just as evident that if the two events are to terminate at the same time they must run concurrently prior to that time, for a period at least. To make this matter per-

fectly plain let the reader draw a circle on a piece of paper, and draw two nearly parallel lines running into this circle. The circle will represent the putting of Christ's enemies beneath His feet and the parallel lines, one the 'sitting' and the other the 'reigning.' But when will these 'enemies' be put beneath Christ's feet? Paul says (1 Cor. xv:26) that 'the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.' Then He must remain at the Father's right hand and reign until death is destroyed. And how and when will death be destroyed? Surely death can only be destroyed by a resurrection from the dead. And is not the whole burden of the apostle's argument in the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians an argument for the resurrection of the dead? Then Christ must sit at the Father's right hand and reign until the dead are all raised, for death cannot be destroyed as long as a human being remains dead. Admitting a general simultaneous resurrection at the end of the world, then the sitting and reigning will terminate then. And certainly Paul's teaching strongly favors this view, for he says in the immediate context, 'Then cometh the end, when He [Christ] shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power [all enemies beneath His feet].' But if the premillennial contention for a resurrection of the righteous prior to the millennium be accepted, then Christ's coming must be postmillennial, for even they hold that the wicked dead will not be raised till after the millennium. But death will not be destroyed till all the wicked are raised, hence the advent must be postmillennial. But how does this harmonize with the view that His reign does not commence till after He leaves the Father's right hand, which He must necessarily do when He comes to earth again. And if His reign commences at the beginning of the millennium, as we understand the premillennialists to teach, when does He deliver up the kingdom to God, 'even the Father?'

"That Christ now reigns is so evident that I am amazed that any thoughtful student of the Bible could doubt it. He distinctly claimed that 'All authority [R.V.] was given unto him in heaven and earth.' John the Baptist said, 'The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand.' Paul said, 'God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name. [That at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord [Ruler] to the glory of God the Father.' What more can be given Him? Paul also said He is 'the blessed and only

potentate, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, who only hath immortality, dwelling in light,' etc. If this does not teach that He is king now, neither does it teach that He now has 'immortality,' etc. John saw Him having 'on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of Kings and Lord of Lords.' And Methodists who deny Christ's present kingship should cease to sing some of the hymns in our hymn book such as 'The Lord is King and earth submits,' etc., and

"'All power is to our Jesus given;
O'er earth's rebellious sons He reigns;
He mildly rules the hosts of heaven,
And holds the powers of hell in chains.'

"'Jesus, immortal King, arise,
Assert Thy rightful sway,' etc."

NOTE F.—ALIENATION OF THE LABORING CLASS FROM
THE CHURCH.

The following article is from an able writer, Rev. H. G. Cairns, of the Saskatchewan conference of the Canadian Methodist Church. It appeared in the "Christian Guardian" of Toronto in the issue of Oct. 29th, 1913, and it illustrates well how the laboring class is alienated from churches that compromise with the sins of wealth:

"It was a beautiful evening as the boat from Seattle was nearing the end of the trip at the Vancouver wharf. The placid waters, the wooded shores, gleaming in the light of the setting sun, the skyline of the city just appearing in view—everything seemed to tell of peace and beneficent purpose.

"There was something jarring in the strident, aggressive voice of the extreme type of Pacific-coast American business woman to my left, as she related to a companion her conquests in the world of speculation. 'You bet, I learned the value of getting in on the ground floor—in my Vancouver deals, and now, while the place is new and this financial tie-up is on, is the time to get up on that G.T.P. line and scoop a few good things. My, but I hope I can rustle a good share of my Vancouver rentals and payments in before Wednesday, when the caravan starts.'

"A little later, on the suburban electric, chatting with a hard working suburban pastor, he said: *'My people are all meeting monthly payments on their homes, and at the prices they have had to pay for lots it takes a long pull and a hard scraping to get even a small house paid for and keep the flour bin replenished, without contributing much to the church work. If it were not for that we would be self-supporting and off the mission fund before this.'* As he was speaking, the jarring, self-assertive voice of the woman on the boat seemed to ring in my ears, *'My, but I hope I can rustle my Vancouver payments, so I can get a scoop on the workingmen who will be coming in north when the railroad is finished.'* That is what the voice seemed to say.

"A few days later another pastor, whose field lay near the heart of the city, said: *'I find many people who won't come to church because they haven't good enough clothes, or money to contribute as they think they ought, rents and the cost of living are so fearfully high down here. But worse than that, I go to many homes and they practically, sometimes literally, slam the door in my face, for they look upon the church as in league with the privileged classes, and out of real sympathy with them.'* Leaving him, and again on the suburban electric, as the car rounded the crest of a hill, looking down over that district, in the gathering gloom, the harsh voice, as of a hovering vulture seemed to say, *'My, but I must wring out those rentals quick, or I can't get my grip on those northern sites before the people get there.'* And up from the glimmering lights of the workingmen's homes, over which the vulture's talons were extended, floated a voice that said, *'I was wronged and exploited, grievously overborne by high rents and low wages, and ye mocked me, by asking me to come into fine churches built by those whose unearned wealth and fat dividends are the direct cause of my high rents and low wages.'* And from the starry heights, the *'lights of that great and awful city of God,'* another voice, strong and steady, with the poise and challenge of eternity, seemed to say, *'Come out from among them and be ye separate.'* *'Go, sell all that thou hast and give your all by coming and following me.'*

"We explain and excuse the incongruous actions of good men of the past by saying that God is ever leading on into growing light and to higher planes, and they spoke and acted from out the level and the light they had attained. Even so, may a kindly posterity explain and excuse our poor efforts to mollify the wounds while leaving the vulture's claws untrimmed."

NOTE G.—METHODIST GENERAL CONVENTION DECLARES
FOR SOCIALISM IN ALL BUT NAME.

"The Church and the Community.

"The past four years have seen a general acceptance of the principle that the church exists to save society as well as to save the individual. This wide-spread recognition of the social task of Christianity is bringing a great gain to personal religion. It is destroying spiritual selfishness. It is relating individuals to God in active fellowship with him who said, 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.'

"Industrial Democracy.

"With the demand for industrial democracy the churches are intensely concerned, for democracy is the expression of Christianity. When it gives every man a part in the government, it is working out Jesus' teaching of the value of every life. When it binds men in political action for the common good, it is working out Jesus' teaching that life can only find its highest value in service. True democracy makes the state the organized will of men to do the will of God. For the will of God as revealed in the Scripture and in our own ideals is that men should live together in a just and righteous brotherhood of service.

"This Christian ideal of the state, however, cannot be realized until the principles of democracy are applied to industry. The events of the past four years demonstrate this beyond question. In several states industrial strife has developed the horrors of civil war and the failure to realize democratic relationships in industry has resulted in the breakdown of civil government, and the setting up of military power. It has rent churches asunder with ill-will and made it as impossible to maintain the Christian ideal within the church as to maintain it in the state.

"The development of Christianity in the church and state requires industrial peace, but there can be no peace in industry, except justice be realized. What is justice in industry can only be determined and maintained, as it has been in government, by the common consent of all concerned. It requires the same application of the teachings of Jesus that has been made in the state. These teachings give the common man a right to participate in the control of industry even as they give him a right to participate in the control of government. Therefore must the churches support all measures that really make for industrial democracy.

"The first method of realizing democracy in industry is through collective bargaining. This gives wage-earners as a group the right to determine in conference with their employers the terms and conditions of employment. The Federal Commission on Industrial Relations declares 'the crux of the whole question of industrial relations is, shall the workers for the protection of their interest be organized and represented collectively by their chosen delegates, even as the stockholders are represented by the directors and by the various grades of executive officials and bosses?' When industry becomes incorporated, collective bargaining is the only means by which the individual worker can protect himself against the power of concentrated capital.

"Collective Bargaining Only a Step.

"While the realization of the principle of collective bargaining is the first step in the democratic control of industry, the first means of giving the worker the opportunity to express himself in industry as he does in the state, the church must lead the world of industry far beyond this.

Collective bargaining, like all bargaining, is apt to be a struggle for advantage; or it may become a mutual alliance of organized capital and organized labor in a particular industry to plunder the rest of the community. Christianity moves up to higher ground. It requires the supremacy of the principle of co-operation in the industrial world. It insists that no group and no combination of groups engaged in the industrial process shall seek merely their own rights or privileges. It demands that every group shall consider its duty to the common welfare, that it shall regard its part in the work process as a ministry of service and shall ask how it may best co-operate with all other groups to promote the general good.

“Christian democracy applied to industry means the development of co-operative relations to the fullest possible extent. It requires that the opportunities for development be given to all on equal terms. It makes possible that the wage earners participate in the ownership as well as in the management of industry. The church must therefore clearly teach the principle of the fullest possible co-operative control and ownership of industry and of the natural resources upon which industry depends, in order that men may be spurred to develop the methods that shall adequately express this principle. Only so can the strife and the hatred which now too often obtain in the industrial world be transformed into peace and good will.

“When all who participate in industry shall become co-operators with each other and co-workers with God in the service of humanity, using the materials which He has provided for the common good and not for selfish advantage, then will the ancient word ‘in the handicraft of their trade is their prayer’ become a modern fact. Then will industry become a religious experience, developing mutual service and

sacrifice, the interpretation in economic terms of the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God.

"The Cost of a Dying Wage.

"The results of the lack of a living wage must be reckoned in social terms. Low wages mean bad housing, under-nourishment, limited intellectual opportunity, the breakdown of the family circle through forcing its members into industry. *Individually the church constantly faces these starved and weakened lives.*

"The sum total of them constitutes a grim set of facts for the community to face. Destitution and pauperism, the extreme forms of poverty find their largest single cause in the fact of inadequate income.

"The area of low income is the area of bad housing, where, in filth and dirt, disease originates and contagion spreads. The mortality maps of our city health departments show the highest death rate in proportion to the population to be in the sections where the lowest paid workers live. Their under-nourished bodies are unable to resist the attacks of the diseases which are bred in their unsanitary surroundings. Delinquency, like disease, breeds the heaviest in the region of low income. Nowhere else is it so prolific. From the homes of the poor come the largest proportion of juvenile delinquency. A recent exhaustive study of prostitution in Europe asserts that the daughters of shame are drawn predominantly from the families of low income.

"These facts challenge the church to action. The Scripture declares that the harvestman who labors in the field must be the first to get a share of the crop. It recognizes the same right even for the dumb beast. 'Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn.'

"Unequal Distribution of Wealth."

"Out of some of the very industries that pay inadequate wages great fortunes are being built. Concerning their makers the Scripture declares, 'Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by injustice; that useth his neighbor's service without wages, and giveth him not his hire.' 'Come, you rich men, weep aloud and howl for your sorrows which will soon be upon you. You have hoarded up wealth in these last days. . . . I tell you that the pay of the laborers who have gathered in your crops—pay which you are keeping back—is calling out against you; and the outcries of those who have been your reapers have entered into the ears of the Lord of the Armies of Heaven.'

"Recent reports show men drawing salaries of \$100,000 per year from industries that pay respectively \$1.53 per day for adult male workers and as low as \$4.50 per week for girls.

"The income tax returns show that there are in the United States 1,598 fortunes yielding an income of \$100,000 a year; that we have 'forty-four families with incomes of \$1,000,000 or more, whose members perform little or no useful service, but whose aggregate incomes totalling at the very least \$50,000,000 per year are equivalent to the earnings of 100,000 wage-earners at the average rate of \$500.'

"The Federal Commission on Industrial Relations puts unjust distribution of wealth and income first among the four main causes of industrial unrest in the United States. It says:

" 'The crux of the question is, Have the workers received a fair share of the enormous increase in wealth which has taken place in this country during the period, as a result largely of their labors? The answer is emphatically, 'No.'

"Overwork.

"The General Conference of 1912 declared its belief that 'in many of our large industries the strenuous working conditions make immediately necessary the eight hour day.' It based this statement upon the consideration that recent investigations conclusively demonstrate that overwork impairs health, intelligence, morality and religion. In the past year many thousand industrial workers have gained the eight hour day, but many others are still struggling for it. In some industries they are still protesting against the twelve hour day. They are demanding release from fatigue, and science has demonstrated that fatigue lowers both the resistance power of the body to disease and the resistance power of the moral nature to the contagion of evil.

"Therefore overwork like underwork is a foe of the spiritual life and the churches must help to destroy it.

"Besides demanding release from fatigue, industrial workers are also demanding the right to leisure in order that they may have the opportunity for recreation and improvement. Increasingly they are discovering that 'the people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.' A church member of long standing writes in support of the plea of his group of workers for an eight hour day:

" 'People little realize that there is in their midst a large army of men whose occupation literally starves the natural longings of wife and children for the companionship of husband and father. Men that were brought up to, and have a desire to keep their morals good have this desire stifled through lack of opportunity to attend places of worship, socials, and entertainments.'

"The church has spent much toil and money in providing higher education. Its membership is increasingly

an educated group, yet the toiling mass of mankind was the rock from which it was originally hewn, the pit from which it was first dug. With this history behind it, if the church should stand aloof from the struggle of the industrial toilers of to-day to secure time and strength for the discipline of education, its right hand would lose its cunning and its tongue cleave to the roof of its mouth.

"Because the teachings of Jesus demand equality of opportunity for all, because their application means both the brotherhood of leisure and the brotherhood of toil, we call upon all our members to support the efforts of the industrial workers to secure release from fatigue, and the benefits of leisure."

NOTE H.—FAMOUS PROPHECY OF JOHN WESLEY, WRITTEN SHORTLY BEFORE HIS DEATH.

"Thoughts Upon Methodism."

"1. I am not afraid that the people called Methodists should ever cease to exist either in Europe or America. But I am afraid, lest they should exist only as a dead sect, having the form of religion without the power. And this undoubtedly will be the case, unless they hold fast both the doctrine, spirit and discipline with which they first set out.

"2. What was their fundamental doctrine? That the Bible is the whole and sole rule both of Christian faith and practice. Hence they learned, (1) That religion is an inward principle; that it is no other than the mind that was in Christ, or in other words, the renewal of the soul after the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness; (2) That this can never be wrought in us, but by the power of the Holy Ghost; (3) That we receive this, and every other blessing, merely for the sake of Christ; and, (4) That who-

soever hath the mind that was in Christ, the same is our brother, and sister, and mother.

"3. In the year 1729, four young students in Oxford agreed to spend their evenings together. They were all zealous members of the Church of England, and had no peculiar opinions, but were distinguished only by their constant attendance on the church and sacrament. In 1735 they were increased to fifteen; when the chief of them embarked for America, intending to preach to the heathen Indians. Methodism then seemed to die away; but it revived again in the year 1738; especially after Mr. Wesley (not being allowed to preach in the churches) began to preach in the fields. One and another then coming to inquire what they must do to be saved, he desired them to meet him altogether; which they did, and increased continually in number. In November, a large building, the Foundry, being offered him, he began preaching therein morning and evening; at five in the morning and seven in the evening, that the people's labor might not be hindered.

"4. From the beginning the men and women sat apart, as they always did in the primitive church, and none were suffered to call any place their own, but the first comers sat down first. They had no pews, and all the benches for rich and poor were of the same construction. Mr. Wesley began the service with a short prayer, then sung a hymn and preached (usually about half an hour), then sung a few verses of another hymn, and concluded with prayer. His constant doctrine was salvation by faith, preceded by repentance, and followed by holiness.

"5. But when a large number of people was joined, the great difficulty was to keep them together. For they were continually scattering hither and thither, and we knew no way to help it. But God provided for this also, when we

thought not of it. A year or two after, Mr. Wesley met the chief of the society in Bristol, and inquired, 'How shall we pay the debt upon the preaching house?' Captain Foy stood up and said: 'Let every one in the society give a penny a week, and it will easily be done.' 'But many of them,' said one, 'have not a penny to give.' 'True,' said the captain; "then put ten or twelve of them to me. Let each of these give what they can weekly, and I will supply what is wanting.' Many others made the same offer. So Mr. Wesley divided the societies among them, assigning a class of about twelve persons to each of these, who were termed leaders.

"6. Not long after, one of these informed Mr. Wesley that, calling on such a one in his house, he found him quarrelling with his wife. Another was found in drink. It immediately struck Mr. Wesley's mind, 'This is the very thing we wanted. The leaders are the persons who may not only receive the contributions, but also watch over the souls of their brethren.' The society in London, being informed of this, willingly followed the example of that in Bristol, as did every society from that time, whether in Europe or America. By this means it was easily found if any grew weary or faint, and help was speedily administered. And if any walked disorderly they were quickly discovered, and either amended or dismissed.

"7. For those who knew in whom they had believed, there was another help provided. Five or six, either married or single men, met together at such an hour as was convenient, according to the direction of St. James, 'Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, and ye shall be healed.' And five or six of the married or single women met together for the same purpose. Innumerable blessings have attended this institution, especially in those

who were going on to perfection. When any seemed to have attained this, they were allowed to meet with a select number, who appeared so far as man could judge, to be partakers of the same 'great salvation.'

"8. From this short sketch of Methodism (so-called), any man of understanding may easily discern that it is only plain, 'Scriptural' religion, guarded by a few prudential regulations. The essence of it is holiness of heart and life; the circumstantial all point to this. And as long as they are joined together in the people called Methodists, no weapon formed against them shall prosper. But if even the circumstantial parts are despised, the essential will soon be lost. And if ever the essential parts should evaporate, what remains will be dung and dross.

"9. It nearly concerns us to understand how the case stands with us at present. I fear, wherever riches have increased (exceeding few are the exceptions), the essence of religion, the mind that was in Christ, has decreased in the same proportion. Therefore do I not see how it is possible, in the nature of things, for any revival of true religion to continue long. For religion must necessarily produce both industry and frugality; and these cannot but produce riches. But as riches increase, so will pride, anger, and love of the world in all its branches.

"10. How, then, is it possible that Methodism, that is, the religion of the heart, though it flourishes now as a green bay tree, should continue in this state? For the Methodists in every place grow diligent and frugal; consequently, they increase in goods. Hence they proportionably increase in pride, in anger, in the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the pride of life. So, although the form of religion remains, the spirit is swiftly vanishing away.

"11. Is there no way to prevent this? this continual declension of pure religion? We ought not to forbid people to be diligent and frugal; we must exhort all Christians to gain all they can and so save all they can; this is, in effect, to grow rich! What way then (I ask again), can we take that our money may not sink us to the nethermost hell? There is one way, and there is no other under heaven. If those who 'Gain all they can,' and 'save all they can,' will likewise 'give all they can,' then, the more they gain, the more they will grow in grace, and the more treasure they will lay up in heaven.

"LONDON, *August 4, 1786.*"





